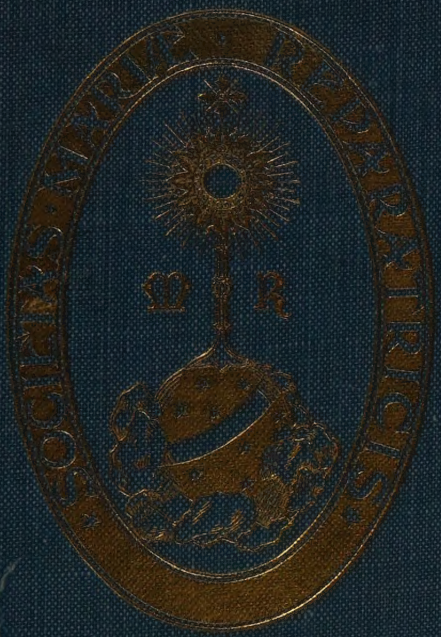
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Oct. 25, 1936.

EMILIE d'OULTREMONT
BARONESS d'HOOGHVORST
FOUNDRESS OF THE
SOCIETY OF MARY REPARATRIX
AND
HER TWO DAUGHTERS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
JOHN GRIFFIN, ROEHAMPTON.

NIHIL OBSTAT:

Eduardus J. Mahoney, S.Th.D.,
Censor deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ Joseph Butt,
Vic. Gen.

Westmonasterii, die 17ª Maii, 1932.

MOTHER MARY OF ST. VICTOR. MOTHER MARY OF ST. JULIENNE.
MOTHER MARY OF JESUS.

EMILIE d'OULTREMONT

BARONESS d'HOOGHVORST

FOUNDRESS OF THE

SOCIETY OF MARY REPARATRIX

AND

HER TWO DAUGHTERS

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ROEHAMPTON, LONDON, S.W.

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PREFACE

THIS new Life of the Mother Foundress of Mary Reparatrix owes much to the scholarly French Life by the Rev. Père Suau, S.J.[1] Yet it is by no means a translation of Père Suau's work, which it supplements by material derived from hitherto unpublished letters and notes, and from personal recollections.

The unusual life story of Emilie d'Oultremont, Baroness d'Hooghvorst is little known to English readers. Her history is, however, but another instance of the mysterious workings of the Holy Spirit, to some extent paralleled by the history of St. Jane Frances de Chantal and to a less degree by that of St. Frances of Rome.

Emilie d'Oultremont was called to leave her country and her father's house, and the key-note of her life was the generosity with which she responded to all the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Step by step, God led her on, until, not content with the total sacrifice of herself and all that was dear to her, she founded the Society that was to be her life work. In the field of reparation she could give free vent to her unbounded generosity and her intense love of Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. A life of self-sacrifice, prayer and entire devotedness in

[1] La Mère Marie de Jésus. Emilie d'Oultremont, Baronne d'Hooghvorst, 1818—1878. Fondatrice de la Société de Marie Réparatrice. Tournai, Casterman, 1930.

God's service, lived in union with Mary, was her idea of what reparation meant. As the reader will see, her life was rarely free from suffering, whether in the form of opposition from those near and dear to her, or in the vicissitudes of the new Congregation and the criticism it evoked, or, later, in acute pain and helplessness. And, like all called to holiness, she had to experience something of the Dark Night of the Soul. Her affectionate, sensitive temperament formed an admirable foundation for the supernatural action of suffering, and for the spiritual refining which God bestows on chosen souls. Yet throughout she was faithful to her one idea of giving herself wholly to Him in the manner in which He seemed to indicate, and of loving Him with her whole heart. Her life was a living commentary on the saying of à Kempis that *Sine dolore non vivitur in amore*.

Our best thanks are due to the Very Rev. H. Keane, S.J., for his unfailing kindness, much helpful advice, and for valuable criticism of the original manuscript.

We wish, also, to thank Brother John Griffin and the Manresa Press for their continual courtesy and help, and Mr. Edmund Harrington of 180, New Bond Street for so kindly restoring the original of the photograph facing page 123.

Easter, 1932.

Tower House,
Chiswick Lane,
London, W. 4.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

EMILIE D'OULTREMONT

1818—1837

Emilie Olympe Marie Antoinette d'Oultremont was born on October 11, 1818, at the Castle of Wégimont about four miles from Liège. She was the third of the four children of Emile Charles Désiré Antoine Joseph, Count d'Oultremont of Wégimont and of Warfusée, and of Marie de Lierneux de Presle.

It had been the early wish of Emilie's father, Count d'Oultremont, to consecrate his life to God in the ecclesiastical state, but the sudden death of his elder brother and the knowledge that this step would add to the already overwhelming grief of his mother, made him give up the idea. Having abandoned his desire of becoming a priest, the Count Emile d'Oultremont henceforth devoted to his country his energy and fortune; both in her politics and campaigns he played a prominent part.

A man of great simplicity of character, frank and upright, affable in manner, Count d'Oultremont was easily approached by all classes of people. It was no unusual sight to see him tramping his domains in hobnailed shoes, wearing a smock on which two or three decorations might be pinned at random.

One day thus attired he was crossing the country on horseback when he was hailed by a carter whose cart had got stuck in the mire. "Here! come along and give me a hand," cried the man in distress. Without hesitation the Count jumped down from his horse and went to give the required assistance. The cart safely landed, its owner fumbled in his pocket, produced a few coppers which he handed over in gratitude for the service rendered. The Count took them, and was delighted at dinner that evening to boast of having earned his tip.

Count d'Oultremont was loved by his servants whom he always treated with great cordiality. When making the rounds of his estate, the workmen would draw him into their cottages, tell him all their troubles, and proudly show him their children. To the poor and to works of charity he gave abundantly, though without the least ostentation.

Emilie's mother, Marie de Lierneux de Presle, was born near Liège. Heiress to the magnificent castle of Presle, she was brought up there in the midst of splendour almost feudal, characterized by a princely hospitality and an unbounded munificence to the poor and unfortunate. In the midst of this splendour Marie de Presle and her sisters grew up simple and unaffected. Having the same strong faith and unfailing charity as her future husband, Marie de Presle was of a much sterner, and even somewhat imperious character.

As we have said, Emilie d'Oultremont was the third of the four children of this marriage. The other three children were Théodore, born in 1815, who died in 1875; Emilie-Marie who lived only five

months, and Charles, born in 1819, who died in 1874.

It was from her father that Emilie inherited her character, talents and tastes. Realizing this, he loved her all the more dearly, and she was always his favourite child. Her mother never quite understood her, and treated her with a severity and strictness which froze Emilie's warm and impressionable heart. Nevertheless the Countess brought up her daughter very simply, and trained her to be kind and thoughtful to others. Keeping closely in touch with all that concerned her household, the Countess initiated Emilie at an early age into the art of housekeeping, and put under her supervision the cupboards containing the provisions and clothing for the poor. Indeed, all her relations seem to have concurred in forming the character of the young girl. One day when only nine or ten years old she was wandering about the corridors of the Castle, when she was met by one of her aunts who said to her, "Where are you going Emilie, and what are you doing?" The little one looked somewhat abashed, and her aunt, taking hold of her two hands, continued, "Remember, child, God has given you these ten fingers with which to work, and they must never be idle!"

Emilie and her brothers had their lessons together. She had more aptitude for study than they, and results usually found her at the head of the trio. She could not bear to be either corrected or punished and when only eleven made the resolution that she would never allow herself to be punished by a master. Child as she was, she held

to this resolution so firmly that it was rarely she had to be reproached for a task badly done or for any disorder during school hours.

Emilie's upbringing was certainly virile. From her earliest years she was taught to be content with everything. At table she once pushed away a dish that was distasteful to her, the Count reprimanded her severely, telling her that one less fortunate would be glad to have what she so disdainfully refused.

The inseparable companion of her father and brothers, Emilie's tastes were not in general those of a young girl, though she loved needlework and devoted a considerable time to it. Her great delight was to join her brothers at their games, whilst her favourite sport was riding. At thirteen she hunted with her father and brothers. She did not know what fear was and looked with pity on a woman who was afraid of horses, while such a weakness in a man seemed ridiculous, and there was not a practical joke she was not ready to play on one who showed signs of cowardice. When quite a young girl she was thrown from her horse while riding, her under lip was cut and bleeding profusely, but she wished to remount and it was with difficulty that she was persuaded to return to the Castle in a carriage.

Practical, ardent and energetic: to these natural gifts Emilie d'Oultremont added those virtues of faith, rectitude and unlimited generosity which were characteristic of her parents and ancestors. She was, however, self-willed and obstinate. Never would she go back on a resolution once taken, and

her mind made up, every obstacle had to give way before her. Warm-hearted and affectionate, yet her spirit of independence made her realize that the mere fact of loving anybody would be to put herself into a state of subjection and thereby lose her liberty.

Of a lively disposition, it must be owned that in church Emilie was something of a fidget. Her mother's oft-repeated observation, "Emilie, look at your prayer book" became one day more than the small child could endure, and she was heard to exclaim, "Mamma, if you will be so good as not to tell me that any more, I promise you I shall read my book." Another time, when just four years old, unable to master her in any other way, her father tied her to her bed. The little one, furious, stiffened herself up, and dragged her bed after her.

It is doubtful whether the training of Emilie's parents, strict and watchful though it was, would ever have subdued her self-will. But God, who had His designs on this soul, took the task into His own Hands. Every Sunday she listened with her brothers to an explanation of the Gospel given by their tutor. One Sunday it happened to be the Gospel of the Assumption, and at the words "Mary has chosen the best part which shall not be taken away from her," Emilie, then barely seven years old, seemed to hear within her soul, "That part is yours, and the world will not take it away from you." Though surprised, she felt exceedingly happy, and this incident left an indelible impression on the child's mind.

From this time onwards, Emilie became much more delicate, and often, at repeated intervals, had to spend several weeks in bed, a prey to acute suffering. She passed a great deal of this time in prayer and in reading the lives of the Saints.

The little girl had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament: she loved to kneel before It exposed, and gaze up at her Lord. She was eleven years old when the great day of her First Communion arrived, and Emilie, supremely happy, received her God for the first time. During the next three years, she continued to communicate every month. As this was the custom adopted by Countess d'Oultremont, Emilie naturally followed her mother, but the intervals between her Communions seemed long to the fervent little communicant, and she sighed after the day which would give her greater liberty. She envied priests their daily and intimate contact with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and would say sadly to herself, "The happiness of approaching God every day can never be mine." For the priest himself she had a respect almost bordering on veneration, and she would reverently kiss those things he had touched because his hands had carried the Body of Our Lord.

About this time she read an abridged life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, to whom ever after she had a great devotion. She loved his character and longed to imitate his great-hearted generosity. Besides this, Count d'Oultremont was devoted to the Society of Jesus of which he often spoke to his little daughter. It was owing to the Count that the

Society was able to open its first College at Namur in 1830. There was much opposition, but the Count was determined, and one day said to his daughter: "If I should have to tramp to Rome to obtain it, the Jesuits shall have what they wish."

One Sunday in the month of October, 1830, whilst staying at the Castle of Wégimont, Emilie, who was ill at the time, returned to her room after having heard Mass in the chapel of the Castle, while the other members of the family went out to attend High Mass at the village church. Happy in her solitude, she was kneeling before her little altar. What then passed within her, she herself was hardly able to tell, but it seemed as though all the delights of Heaven had been poured into her soul. For more than an hour she knelt there, until a servant knocked at the door to announce a visitor from the neighbourhood. Constantly during her life God reminded her of this grace, and henceforth no delights of the world could lure Emilie d'Oultremont from the love and service of her Divine Master.

At the end of August, 1832, Count and Countess d'Oultremont took Emilie and her two brothers for a long holiday in Italy. Everything amused and interested her, and as she spoke Italian fluently, nothing escaped her. After staying a month in Rome they went to Naples where the beauty of the scenery charmed her. It was during her visit to Italy that Emilie obtained permission to go to Communion every week, and even several times a week. It is a striking indication of the trend of her thoughts to find this permission entered in her diary as the most noteworthy event of her holiday in Italy. To-

wards the end of their stay in Naples, Emilie was taken ill with fever and had to remain for three weeks in bed. When she was able to travel they returned to Rome, where, for a month longer, she was obliged to live more or less the life of a recluse, rarely going out except to Mass on Sundays at the Gesù. Both Count d'Oultremont and his daughter were passionately fond of music, and during their stay in Rome and at Naples, they would go two or three times a week to the Opera. But in spite of his love of music, the Count would never consent to go to the theatre during Lent or Advent, nor on Fridays or the vigils of feasts, nor on the feast days themselves, nor would he ever permit any of his children to do so.

Emilie returned from Italy more delicate than ever. She delighted in the solitude necessitated by her state of health, and took advantage of it to live a life of yet closer union with God.

October 11, 1834, was Emilie's sixteenth birthday, and the following winter, which was passed in their town house at Liège, she made her debût into Society. Life now became for her a daily round of entertainments and amusements; balls, parties, theatres, followed each other in turn, and Emilie became what she termed "careless and indifferent in the service of God." Nevertheless, she still went every morning to seven o'clock Mass with her mother. She also continued to go every fortnight to Confession, to say, each day, the Office of the Immaculate Conception, her rosary, and usual prayers, and she never failed to do a certain amount of spiritual reading. In the eyes of most people,

this would have been considered a devout and fervent life. Society had amused and distracted Emilie, but it had never impaired the delicacy of either her heart or conscience, though like the great Theresa of Avila, she later regretted those two years given up to vain, though harmless, distraction. Neither the one nor the other had ever ceased to love what was good, but when they realized the holiness to which God was calling them, they very legitimately regretted that they had not always followed the more perfect way.

Had Emilie d'Oultremont been less attentive to the promptings of grace during these two years of worldly distraction, for which she reproached herself so severely, her future life would probably have been quite other than it was, but the regret and remorse she felt showed her that God was calling her to something higher. Henceforth, with all the determination of her strong will, she set out to follow the road of perfection and began that spiritual ascent which was to lead her to the heights of sanctity.

CHAPTER II

THE BARONESS D'HOOGHVORST

1837—1847

Emilie d'Oultremont was now eighteen years of age. She had never in any way paraded her piety and devotion, nor spoken to anyone of her life of close union with God. It is true that she and her cousin, who was also a most intimate friend, and who shared her tastes, had often discussed together the project of leaving the world, but to both these young girls their dream seemed so rash that they hardly dared to think seriously about it. No one else suspected for one moment that the idea of a religious vocation had ever entered Emilie's mind. Her parents thought it time to be thinking of her marriage and told her so. Marriage held no attraction whatsoever for Emilie, but what definite opposition could she bring to the suggestion? She knew that God alone held, and would always hold, the first place in her heart, and yet she had not felt any call to a definite form of religious life. Such being the case, she let herself follow the natural course of events. Marriage on the continent is much more of a family arrangement than it is with us, and so, according to the custom of the country, Emilie's parents endeavoured to find for their daughter a suitable husband. Not that the future bride had nothing to say in the matter, for while Count d'Oultremont stipulated that his future son-in-law should consent to make his home with them, she de-

BARONESS d'HOOGHVORST.

manded that he should be, before all things, a fervent Catholic. She was, however, in no hurry to see the affair brought to a conclusion, for the very thought of marriage saddened her. During the winter which the family passed in Brussels, after several proposals which she refused, Emilie at length consented to become the bride of the Baron Victor d'Hooghvorst, but not before ascertaining that he was as good a Catholic as he was a perfect gentleman.

On October 19, 1837, Emilie d'Oultremont became the Baroness d'Hooghvorst, and at the same ceremony her brother Théodore was married to Mademoiselle de Coppis de Duras.

Victor Joseph Ghislain Van der Linden d'Hooghvorst, second son of the General Van der Linden d'Hooghvorst, was born of an illustrious family at the Castle of Meysse on August 5, 1813, and at the time of his marriage to Emilie d'Oultremont had the prospect of a brilliant future before him. As loyal and devoted in the service of God as in that of his country, frank and warm-hearted, though with a reserved and somewhat cold manner, he was able to understand the generous character and appreciate the noble qualities of his future bride. Later Emilie was to acknowledge that in her heart, next to her passionate love for God, came her deep and tender love for her husband. His virtuous life, alone, she said, would have made her love him. Yet the thought of her approaching marriage saddened her. For so many years God had had the first place in her affections and thoughts, and the idea of any human being coming between

her and this intimate life of union with her Divine Master was almost more than she could bear. The day before her wedding she spent hours in tears, and one of her cousins seeing her looking so sad said to her, "You look like a victim being led to the altar of sacrifice."

Once her marriage was an accomplished fact Baroness d'Hooghvorst looked upon her new state of life as God's will for her, and its duties, therefore, as a sacred obligation, to which she was to devote herself with all her heart.

As we have already said, Count d'Oultremont would not hear of separating from his children, even after their marriage. The two eldest continued to make their home with their parents in Italy or Liège during the winter months, and at the Castle of Warfusée during the summer. Later they were joined by Count d'Oultremont's second son Charles.

During the first winter spent in Rome and Naples, Madame d'Hooghvorst was so ill that the doctors nearly despaired of saving her life. An improvement setting in, she was brought back to Belgium, and there condemned to live a very quiet life. This enforced retirement did not, however, prevent her from assisting her parents in entertaining the many guests who were received at the Castle where she was the heart and soul of every gathering. Tall, very graceful, with an air of distinction and a charming manner, there was no topic upon which she could not converse.

In 1839 Count d'Oultremont was named Minister to the Holy See. He accepted this office for five years on condition that each summer he

should return to Belgium. During this period Baron d'Hooghvorst was attached to the Legation. Thus the Count was always accompanied by his daughter and son-in-law.

In Rome during the winter of 1840 Madame d'Hooghvorst was to find for the first time a director to whom she could freely open her soul. From now until the end of her life she was always to have the good fortune to be guided in the way of perfection by masters exceptionally experienced in the spiritual life and who were destined by God to help her, step by step, to the lofty heights of sanctity. Each one will only accompany her part of the way, then, his mission ended, will leave to others to carry on the work thus begun. We have but to study the names of these directors, and the way in which they treated their penitent, to form some idea of the solidity of Madame d'Hooghvorst's virtue.

Father Janssens, S.J., the first of these directors, providentially sent by God to Madame d'Hooghvorst, was a man of duty, resolute and practical; he quickly understood the soul now under his direction and although his treatment of his penitent was kind, it was still more energetic. He let nothing pass and it was to him that Madame d'Hooghvorst owed the habit she now acquired of watching carefully over each movement of her soul, and thus, without either weakness or scruple, living in constant dependence upon grace.

The devout and fervent life of Madame d'Hooghvorst had naturally a great influence upon those around her, especially on her father and hus-

band. M. d'Hooghvorst very soon adopted the customs of his pious wife, each morning attending Mass, and letting no day pass without saying his rosary. He looked upon the smallest laws of the Church as sacred, and not only did he give lavishly to the poor, but he visited them in their homes and was ever ready to help them in their troubles. Not content with leaving Madame d'Hooghvorst full liberty to follow the mode of life she had adopted, he was always the first to encourage her in it, though neither the one nor the other ever sacrificed to their devotions a single one of their worldly duties.

In the spring of 1841 Madame d'Hooghvorst returned to Belgium provided with a letter of introduction from Father Janssens to Father Bossaert, S.J., Rector of the College of Liège, under whose direction the former now placed her. For twelve years Madame d'Hooghvorst continued to receive from Father Bossaert the same firm and energetic direction based on absolute obedience to her director who was perhaps even more exacting than Father Janssens had been.

God, by special graces of which she makes no mention, must have prepared Madame d'Hooghvorst to receive very rare spiritual favours, for, the first time she speaks of these extraordinary graces, it is without astonishment and as of something to which she was already accustomed.

We know that when quite a small child Emilie was a fervent admirer of St. Ignatius. When in Rome she always loved to pray before his altar or in the room once inhabited by the Saint. One day while praying in this room she received a grace

which later on was to be renewed at various times, each renewal making a yet deeper impression on her soul. We will let Madame d'Hooghvorst relate this in her own words.

"I cannot tell what passed between this holy father and myself. It was something so consoling, so intimate, that it brought tears to my eyes. He made me understand that one day I should belong to him. I saw him, with the eyes of my soul, wearing a chasuble and holding in his hand the book of the Constitutions, pointing out that later on I should follow his Rules. This was absolutely incomprehensible to me. I regretted that I was not free to consecrate myself to God, but I took this for pure imagination as its realization seemed impossible. I already had two sons."

"One day," she writes again, "when suffering more than usual, Our Lord appeared to me as He often did, and with a look of indescribable tenderness showed me His Heart. (It is usually under this form that I think of Our Lord and I rarely see Him otherwise.) On this day He came to me looking very sad, holding in His Hands two crowns, one of roses, the other of thorns. Before He addressed a single word to me, I quickly grasped the crown of thorns and said to Him: 'Beloved Master if this crown which I accept with all my heart could spare Thee a little suffering, how happy I should be.' I was alone in my room and for more than an hour I could not keep back my tears, for Jesus made me understand both His love and His suffering. From that day the crown of thorns was dear to me, and my adorable Master thanked me with too great a love for me to forget it. Each day Our Lord was drawing me more closely to Himself. St. Ignatius again appeared to me, and assured me still more strongly of my call to the religious life and to follow his Rule. Looking at him I said in astonishment, 'How can that be possible?' For to me it was still an inexplicable mystery. He seemed to reply: 'Have patience, time will

teach you all.' It was not only during the time of prayer that Our Lord and St. Ignatius appeared to me, but even in the drawing-room, at a ball or theatre.

One day at a grand ball in Rome, while walking through the reception room on the arm of Count de Seysselle, Grand Equerry to King Charles-Albert of Piedmont, who was pointing out to me how magnificent the decorations were, suddenly becoming oblivious to all around, I distinctly heard Our Lord saying to me: 'You see and realize all the world can give you, you have felt within yourself the happiness I can give you, choose then between these two.' The choice was quickly made and I replied: 'Master, Thou alone in my life!' It was only a matter of a moment, but in that moment I had understood much, and it was with great difficulty that I could bring my thoughts back to my surroundings. The Count asked me what was the matter. I turned the conversation, but Jesus had taken possession of my soul, and from that moment I felt that nothing could ever break our union."

Business matters not allowing Count d'Oultremont to remain so long a time away from Belgium, he resigned his post at the Legation and left Rome in the spring of 1844. The Pope thought he was leaving as usual for a holiday or he would never have allowed so faithful a Minister to tender his resignation. Madame d'Hooghvorst, knowing her father's intentions, was broken-hearted at the thought of leaving Rome, and wondered whether she would ever see again the city in which for five years her soul had found strength and life. They returned to Warfusée, and there took up their accustomed life. Count d'Oultremont succeeded admirably in uniting to his own the households of his children, and visitors came in great numbers to that

patriarchal home where three generations of masters were loyally served and loved by three generations of servants.

In order that love and union might reign amongst them, all were ready to sacrifice themselves for one another and Madame d'Hooghvorst's conduct on this point was admirable. Her loving devotedness and self-sacrifice sprang from a supernatural source. Each day she passed several hours before the Blessed Sacrament; her piety, however, was never wearisome or annoying to others, nor did it prevent her entertaining her guests with a tact and a charm that endeared her more and more, and made her almost indispensable to the old Count. Extremely reserved, it was only to a very few intimate friends that Madame d'Hooghvorst revealed her real self, but when in the midst of a brilliant entertainment she met one of them she would whisper in passing, "And He is alone! He is abandoned!" This indifference of His creatures, which had so often wounded the sensitive Heart of Our Lord, also deeply moved the loving and generous heart of Madame d'Hooghvorst. Daily she saw that the majority of those around her brought to the service of the world love and affection, wealth and talent, name and honours, yet thought so little of Him to whom they owed all these things. To console Our Lord, especially in the Blessed Sacrament, for a little of this indifference was later one of the chief aims of her work of reparation.

Each year while in Belgium their relations expected Baron d'Hooghvorst and his family to pay a visit to their respective Castles. M. d'Hoogh-

vorst loved to take his wife to his old home in the Castle of Meysse and there spend some time with his parents. Baron and Baroness d'Hooghvorst now had three children whom they loved passionately. Their own close union of heart and soul gave rise to an implicit trust in one another and nothing seemed to be wanting to the joys that life could give them.

In strange contrast to this happy home life came the oft-repeated, and to the Baroness quite inexplicable, call from God to a life so entirely different. One evening, having just dressed for dinner, Madame d'Hooghvorst was about to leave her room when suddenly she saw before her St. Ignatius in the black habit of the Jesuits. He held in his hand the open book of the Constitutions of his Order and said, "One day you will follow this Rule." This oft-repeated vision, if it astonished her, no longer frightened her. Understanding nothing she repeated to herself, "One day you will follow this Rule." Her maid seeing her hesitation in leaving the room thought she was looking for her fan. "Has Madame forgotten something?" she asked. At these words Madame d'Hooghvorst, brought back to reality, replied, "No, thank you," and went down to the drawing-room, still repeating to herself the strange enigma.

Shortly after the incident just related Madame d'Hooghvorst one day in the chapel saw her husband kneeling, saying his rosary, as he often did. Turning towards Our Lord she said: "It is true he is very good, but how I long that he should love Thee above all things." Her prayer finished, the

Baroness seemed to hear these words: "If in order that he should love Me above all things you had to make the sacrifice of his life, would you still make the same request?" She replied: "Oh, yes, my Jesus, anything in order that he may belong entirely to Thee." Madame d'Hooghvorst left the chapel preoccupied and somewhat downhearted but assuring her Divine Master that she did not retract what she had said and that she was quite ready to make the same prayer again.

Madame d'Hooghvorst passed the winter of 1845 at Nice. Here she was very ill and almost at death's door with a severe attack of laryngitis. Silent days and sleepless nights were passed in meditation. She promised St. Ignatius that, if cured, she would build a church in his honour as soon as she inherited her own fortune. She was cured. The following summer her daughter Marguerite was born. She had been preceded by two brothers, Adrian and Edmund, and a little sister Olympe, nearly two years her senior. Later, in 1851, hearing that the College of St. Servais at Liège was very anxious to have a chapel, Madame d'Hooghvorst in giving it to them fulfilled the promise made at Nice. All was arranged with so much discretion that hardly anybody at the time knew the name of their generous benefactress.

Madame d'Hooghvorst's health improved very much, and the winter of 1846 was passed in Genoa. Nothing seemed to be wanting to complete the happiness of that family life. It was as if God had, during those winter months, purposely intensified the joys that were so soon to end.

Baron d'Hooghvorst had a great friend whom he treated as a brother. This was Count Gustave de Stakelberg, a Greek schismatic converted by Father de Ravignan, S.J. Both were passionately fond of hunting, and when in the month of April, 1846, Count de Stakelberg asked Victor d'Hooghvorst to join him in his hunting expedition in Rome, the latter could not resist the temptation. The two friends took up their quarters on the Pontine Marshes. It was during Lent and both rigorously kept the prescribed fast which no doubt disposed them to become more easily a prey to the fevers so prevalent in the district. They returned to Genoa doomed men, and died within five months of one another, the Count dying first.

"When my husband left me to go on that hunting expedition," writes Madame d'Hooghvorst, "I felt as though my heart were breaking, it was in vain I tried to hide it from him, he told me that I was unreasonable and that for a short absence of six weeks there was no cause to fear. Nevertheless, something told me this would be his last journey and the presentiment proved only too true. They returned to Genoa ill, and with no hope of recovery. Two days after their return we set out for Belgium."

During this journey Count d'Oultremont became so ill that for three weeks they were obliged to stop at Fribourg, where he received the Last Sacraments. The youngest daughter of Madame d'Hooghvorst, always delicate, was also ill, and M. d'Hooghvorst felt himself getting so much worse that he was afraid that soon they would not be able to move him. In this heartrending predicament

Madame d'Hooghvorst with her husband and children started for Belgium as soon as her father could be left. On their arrival at Liège M. d'Hooghvorst took to his bed from which he never rose again, and the life of his little daughter, whom he loved dearly, was despaired of. Yet always resigned to God's will he would say to his wife: "Do not complain if she is taken from us, she belongs to God first and there will be an angel in Heaven praying for us." After eleven months of severe illness Marguerite recovered, but she was two and a half years old before there was any real hope of a permanent cure.

The faith and resignation of M. d'Hooghvorst and his happiness in the midst of suffering were a great consolation to his wife. God was everything to him, and he continually thought of Heaven and asked her not to pray for his recovery. One day during their long talks which nearly always turned on God and spiritual things, Madame d'Hooghvorst asked her husband if it did not cost him much to leave her, his children, and all those he loved so dearly. "Yes," he replied, "for I am perfectly happy and there is nothing more I could desire on earth, but what is even all the happiness you have given me compared to Heaven? You will, I know, bring up our children as I should wish, but as for me, *I love God above all* and only desire to die that I may see Him and enjoy Him eternally." These words *"I love God above all"* were surely the answer to that prayer which Madame d'Hooghvorst made just a year before. She then understood that his death was certain and the last ray of hope disappeared. Nevertheless, not wishing to let slip a single chance

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of saving his life, Madame d'Hooghvorst took her husband to Paris in order to consult the most able specialists, but without success. At the end of six weeks, on August 4th, they returned to the Castle of Warfusée, where Baron d'Hooghvorst wished to die.

In the course of conversation M. d'Hooghvorst one day asked his wife to look very specially after the children, telling her to make them before everything else good Christians: though his two sons were the last of their name, he wished nothing better than to see them consecrate their lives to God. "Provided that their souls live, what matter if my name perish?" "I promise you," he added, "that my first prayer on reaching Heaven will be to ask that our four children may give themselves to God. My family will oppose it, I know, but do not fear, tell them that I wished it, that it was my last request, and you must do all in your power to help them."

The night of August 8th, seeing that her husband was worse, Madame d'Hooghvorst sent to Liège to Father Bossaert, who came and administered the Last Sacraments to the dying man. He lingered during the next day and in the evening thanked his wife for all her tender care of him, saying: "You have never caused mé a moment's displeasure but that for which I thank you above all is the way that you have taught me to love God. As you know I am going to Heaven but it is to you I owe it and I shall never forget you."

After Mass next morning the Baron sent for his four children, the oldest being only eight and a half,

and told them always to love God and look after their mother. He then called for Madame d'Hooghvorst and with tears in his eyes, gave her his rosary which he asked her to keep always, then taking her hands into his, he said: "How happy I am! Oh! Emilie, if you only knew how happy I am." The priest gave him the last absolution and after two hours agony he died.

M. d'Hooghvorst's family were all staying at the Castle. His death impressed them deeply. It is rare to see a man of 34 surrounded with every joy that life can give, welcome death as the greatest happiness of all, not only resigned, but content and longing to die. Between the old Count and his son-in-law there had always been a strong friendship. At his death Count d'Oultremont said to his daughter: "I have always loved Victor, but his illness and death have shown me that we had a saint living amongst us."

Her husband's holy death was a great consolation to Madame d'Hooghvorst in the midst of her cruel suffering. After thanking God for this consolation, the first thing she did was to promise that she would now bind herself to Him by as strict a vow as her director would permit. Father Bossaert would only allow her then to make a temporary vow, but a year later, on September 8, 1848, the same Father, on a visit to Count d'Oultremont, having said Mass in the chapel of the Castle, allowed Madame d'Hooghvorst, after Communion, to consecrate herself for ever to her Divine Master.

God leads souls to sanctity by many and various ways, but there is one road on which all must travel,

following in the footsteps of their crucified Master, and that is the road of total renunciation. The death of her husband was for Madame d'Hooghvorst the first of those sacrifices demanded of her by God, sacrifices which were to crucify her heart and by which she was despoiled of every attachment to which she clung on earth. As we shall see, her generous heart never recoiled from the offering she had made to God.

CHAPTER III

VOCATION

1847—1857

THE period of her life immediately following her husband's death was for Madame d'Hooghvorst a time of double sorrow. Though she was resigned to the separation, it had left a void in her heart and life which she felt bitterly and which could not easily be filled. Then the uncertainty of what God was asking of her and the seeming impossibility of realizing His designs, in as far as she could see them, added to her grief a torture all the more keenly felt because she had to conceal it from those around her.

Mercilessly logical, yielding only to evidence, but then surrendering entirely, Madame d'Hooghvorst wished neither to be deaf to the call of God nor to be the dupe of a false vocation. While awaiting a more definite manifestation of God's will, the Baroness gave herself up entirely to what others told her, and not without reason, were the duties of her social position. Until the death of her parents Madame d'Hooghvorst, with a breadth of outlook which she always retained, succeeded in giving to her social duties all the time they demanded of her while leaving herself sufficiently free to devote a yet greater part of her time to God and the poor.

Wishing to give her a little diversion Count d'Oultremont proposed taking his daughter to

Rome; she gladly accepted and in November they set out. There she hoped to have the consolation of seeing once again Father Janssens, S.J., who had on her previous visit been so kind to her, but only eight days before her arrival in Rome she heard of his death. The revolution had already broken out in Italy and they arrived in Rome in January, 1848, to find the populace in an uproar; their fury was specially directed against the Society of Jesus and this was to both the Count and his daughter a cause of great sorrow.

During their stay in Rome Count d'Oultremont and his family were accorded an audience with His Holiness Pope Pius IX., who received them with great kindness, giving Countess d'Oultremont and her daughter his hand to kiss. Madame d'Hooghvorst took with her to this audience her two sons aged nine and seven, and her eldest daughter Olympe, just four years old. The little girl had brought with her a red coral rosary to be blessed by the Pope. The Holy Father, taking it from her, held it above her head, just lifting it out of her reach each time she jumped up to catch it. Seeing the audience drawing to a close and her rosary still in the hand of the Holy Father, Olympe whispered to her mother, "I brought it for him to bless not to keep." The Pope enquired of Madame d'Hooghvorst what the little one had said. On being told, with a fatherly smile, he handed her back the precious rosary saying: *"Olimpia, ricordatevi che bisogna essere una grandissima santa."* (Olympe, remember, you must become a great saint.) And just as they were leaving the audience chamber, the

Pope, raising his hand in blessing, said again: *"Olimpia, Olimpia, non dimenticate che il Santo Padre vi commanda d'essere santa."* (Olympe, Olympe, do not forget the Holy Father commands you to become a saint.) After this audience the child was nearly always called Pia, the abbreviation of the name given her by the Pope, and those who follow her life story may well believe that the Holy Father's blessing did not remain sterile.

"The day of our departure," writes Madame d'Hooghvorst, "I went to hear Mass at 6 a.m. in the room of St. Ignatius. The Very Reverend Father General had sent me a message to say that knowing that I was coming, he himself would say Mass, wishing to give me Holy Communion for the last time. After Mass we talked together and he let me see how deeply he felt the enforced exile from Rome (the Jesuits were being banished the next day) and how he himself did not count on seeing Rome again. Blessing me he asked me to pray for him, and gave me a relic as a souvenir of our meeting in the Sanctuary of St. Ignatius. With a full heart, for I was deeply touched, I promised him my prayers and thanked him for all his kindness to me, then kissing his hand, I left him."

On her return to Belgium Madame d'Hooghvorst multiplied her visits to the sick and poor and not even the reproaches of her mother could keep her back from this charitable work. She would set out in the early morning on horseback with two large baskets of provisions hanging on either side of the saddle. Protected by a large Newfoundland dog she passed through a wood, reputed to be not very safe, which separated the Castle from the village. Arrived at the village, she began her rounds, visiting the needy, looking after the sick, making their

beds and tidying their rooms. One infirm and exceedingly bad-tempered old woman only ceased her tantrums on the arrival of the Baroness, who was the only one ever allowed to make her bed. A little child of three had to be operated on. "Will Madame the Baroness be there?" was the mother's first question and she would not permit the operation until she received a reply in the affirmative. This poor child's two arms adhered to its body as far as the elbow; the surgeon detached them leaving two terrible wounds which Madame d'Hooghvorst dressed every day for several months. Another time it was an amputation. "I consent," said the sick man, "if Madame the Baroness will be there." "I shall be there," she replied, and during the operation she stood at the patient's bedside, while he grasped her two hands, repeating without intermission: "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Madame!" Madame d'Hooghvorst had not taken off her rings and the pain caused by the man's grasp was almost unbearable. Perfectly self-possessed she gave no sign either of suffering or emotion.

When the time came to return, the peasants would accompany Madame d'Hooghvorst through the dreaded wood until the Castle was in sight. At Rome as well as Warfusée the Baroness carried on her charitable work, only there she chose the hour of the siesta, as very few people being then abroad, she was able to go her way unnoticed.

Moving amongst all classes Madame d'Hooghvorst never disguised either her principles or convictions and would boldly speak of God with an ardour that subdued her listeners. One young nobleman,

Prince Chigi, many years later acknowledged that he owed his vocation to the ecclesiastical state to a conversation he had had with her at a big dinner party.

A friend, hesitating before a sacrifice which she knew that God was asking of her, Madame d'Hooghvorst, at her wit's end for an argument, cried out: "You refuse God that! If He asked me for my four children I would give them to Him." God was to take her at her word. Madame d'Hooghvorst's children were the joy of her life; she loved them passionately with a love they fully reciprocated. Olympe had a very special affection for her mother and followed her about everywhere. When little more than a baby, she would allow no one to touch anything belonging to her mother without crying out, almost in a fury, "that's Mamma's, that's Mamma's!" Between Olympe and her little sister there was a great difference in character. The former very lively, overflowing with good spirits, was never still a moment and always ready to join in her brothers' games. Marguerite, on the contrary, was extremely delicate and the object of her mother's unceasing solicitude. Naturally timid, her gentle disposition and charm of manner made her loved by all. The two sisters were inseparable; Olympe always constituted herself the protectress of her little sister in a way that was touching to see. Unhappily, both children hated anything in the way of study and when the time for lessons came their faces grew long and tears were often seen to flow. Olympe would not positively refuse to learn but when urged to work harder and not waste her

time she had an unconcerned way of looking at her governess, which seemed to say: "I will do neither more nor less." Her mother scolded her with little or no effect, the only thing that for a short while seemed to stimulate her was to threaten that if she did not study she would not receive the little sum given her at the end of the month to distribute among the poor. Olympe, being quick and intelligent, had a natural facility for learning, but to give herself trouble over anything never so much as entered her little head. Indeed, discomfort and inconvenience under any form were distasteful to her. Even the creases in her sheets were a cause of annoyance. Madame d'Hooghvorst told the nurse to take no notice of the caprices of her young daughter, so it was her uncle, Count Charles d'Oultremont, who adored her and spoilt her accordingly, who was coaxed to smooth out the refractory sheets when he went to say good night to his little niece. Her toilet was to Olympe a much more interesting subject than lessons. She loved pretty clothes, which she wore with a grace and simplicity natural to her, though tidiness was not her strong point.

Her grandparents, like her uncle, loved and spoilt her and a request refused by her mother was not infrequently referred to them.

To be allowed down to the drawing-room was her delight. One day Madame d'Hooghvorst sent the child's governess to take her away; displeased at having to leave so soon, Olympe went, two or three minutes later, to the room where her mother was dressing for dinner and said with a serious air: "Granny is your Mamma and you are mine. You

can scold me because you are my Mamma and Granny, who is your Mamma, can scold you. Very well, I will tell Granny to scold you because you have displeased Pia very much."

The death of the father she loved so dearly, made a deep impression upon his eldest daughter, young as she was. For several days she scarcely touched her food and when urged to do so she replied: "No, no, I can't eat when Mamma is crying so much."

Each day the children were taken to pay a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament and they all had, Olympe especially, a great love for Our Blessed Lady. In the evening Madame d'Hooghvorst herself said night prayers, everyone, even the servants, being present.

The devout and fervent life of Madame d'Hooghvorst often caused her parents to fear that she would enter the religious state. It was to allay this suspicion and at the same time to gain more liberty of action for herself that Madame d'Hooghvorst still mixed so much in Society and still affected the elegant and fashionable mode of dress followed by her mother and sister-in-law who, seeing this, would comfort themselves with the thought that one with so much taste and elegance and so ready to attend the functions of the world could not have any real desire of becoming a nun.

Nevertheless, this desire of the religious life became each day more imperative. Madame d'Hooghvorst spoke of it to Father Bossaert, who said little in reply except that she had yet a long road to traverse before such a wish could be realized. Perhaps the remarks of their elders had been over-

heard by the children. Be that as it may, it is certain they, too, began to suspect that their beloved mother was going to leave them. One day when Madame d'Hooghvorst was reading the life of Madame Acarie, her eldest son, then ten years old, coming into the room said to her: "What are you reading, Mamma?" She told him that she was reading the life of a saintly lady who had become a Carmelite. At these words the little fellow burst into tears, crying, "You, too, are thinking of becoming a nun and leaving us all. It is wrong, very wrong, and you mustn't do it." At this moment the door opened and in came the three other children one after the other. Seeing their brother crying they asked their mother what was the matter; Adrian took it upon himself to answer and in an instant all four were in tears.

Olympe thought for some time what she could possibly do to keep her mother from taking such a step. Coming to no feasible conclusion the little one, then only six years old, said: "No, that would be impossible, we couldn't prevent Mamma being a nun. I have an idea, I know what I shall do so that I need never leave her. I will become a nun too." Of course Marguerite, only four, said she would do the same and the two children were quite consoled as to their future. Not so with the two boys. In vain did Madame d'Hooghvorst promise that she would never leave them until they could do without her; their only reply was that they would always need her and that it was wrong to leave them alone. Olympe, with her usual ingenuity, said: "There is a way for you to see Mam-

ma, become a priest and you can be chaplain at the Convent and you will see her when you give her Holy Communion." But it was in vain, they would not be comforted and were still crying when they went to bed. The Countess d'Oultremont, hearing of this incident, reproached her daughter severely and brought forward every argument she could think of to condemn her ideas. Yet in spite of her mother's reproaches and her grief at the thought of making her children suffer, Madame d'Hooghvorst's soul was in peace for she had a deep conviction that one day her desire to enter religion would be realized.

On the plea that she was killing herself with daily Communion, long prayers and charitable works besides her many other duties, her parents had appealed to both doctor and priest, begging them to urge her to mitigate in some degree her strenuous life, but from neither appeal did they get any satisfaction.

Madame d'Hooghvorst passed the next year 1849 with her parents in Belgium. At the end of July the Rev. Father Roothaan, General of the Society of Jesus, came to Belgium. It was quite an unofficial visit and knowing the pleasure it would give Count d'Oultremont's family to see him, he said he would dine with them on his way to Liège. As soon as the Count saw the carriage arriving he called his wife and children so that all should go down to welcome this friend whom he greatly loved and venerated. The carriage drew up under a group of trees in the courtyard before the Castle and the Father General stepped out while all knelt

to receive his blessing. He was accompanied by Father de Villefort.

During the winter months Count d'Oultremont began to suffer from the illness which was eventually to prove fatal, consequently there was not the usual amount of entertaining in the Castle. The Countess d'Oultremont was also ill.

In the April of 1850 all returned again to Warfusée and the usual summer visits were exchanged. Countess d'Oultremont, who was suffering from heart disease, after a month of terrible suffering died on September 14th. It fell to Madame d'Hooghvorst to break the sad news to her father, who was too ill himself to be present at his wife's death. This loss was a terrible blow to the old Count and greatly increased his own illness. More than ever he clung to his daughter who now rarely left him.

Her father's state of health was a source of great sorrow and anxiety to Madame d'Hooghvorst, for it seemed that nothing could be done to relieve the veritable martyrdom he was undergoing. The cold seemed to accentuate it and he expressed a wish to go to Italy. Madame d'Hooghvorst offered to accompany him but his little grandchild, Marguerite, went instead. They left Warfusée in November with a friend of the Count's, a priest, and several servants, whilst Madame d'Hooghvorst remained in Liège. It was with a certain uneasiness that she had seen her father set out on his journey, and about February 10th she received a letter from Naples saying that he was very ill and asking that either she or her brother should go to him. Neither of her

brothers were able to leave Belgium, while she had her two sons at school ill with measles, and her eldest daughter in bed at home with the same complaint. Madame d'Hooghvorst consulted Father Bossaert, who told her that it was her duty to go to her father; she was broken-hearted at having to leave her children ill; the two little boys cried bitterly, while Olympe, sobbing, clung to her mother, who had to tear herself away. She left her daughter in the care of a governess and a nurse upon whom she could rely and set out with her maid and two servants. On reaching Florence Madame d'Hooghvorst learnt that her father was expected there, having been able to be moved from Naples. The old Count was delighted to see his daughter again, her presence being a consolation to him in the midst of his dreadful suffering. After three weeks spent in Florence they were able to leave for Montpellier and by the end of May were on their way back to Belgium.

In the month of June, Count d'Oultremont, wishing his daughter to get a change of air, she went to stay with her aunt at the Castle of Bauffe, near the college of Brugelette. Though exceedingly kind to her, Madame d'Hooghvorst had felt for some time that Father Bossaert was no longer able to give her the direction she needed. She was not able to speak to him either of her attraction towards penance and mortification or of her ardent longing for the religious life; whenever she tried to broach these subjects he evaded the conversation. It so happened that during these few days passed at Bauffe, Madame d'Hooghvorst visited the college

of Brugelette, a Father showed her round and interiorly she understood that in him she would find a guide who would restore her peace of soul. On her return home, Madame d'Hooghvorst found her father rather worse and to her great distress no relief could be found for his sufferings. By the end of July the attacks became more frequent and of longer duration and it was evident that the end was near. The Count himself felt that he could not live much longer and prepared for death.

On August 2nd his daughter suggested that he should receive the Last Sacraments, he replied: "That will be a real happiness which I have long desired."

Father Bossaert came into the room to hear his confession for the last time. Madame d'Hooghvorst rose to leave, but the Count told her to remain. "Oh, no," replied his daughter, "I shall come back after you have made your confession"; to which her father answered: "You know that you have my entire confidence, that there is nothing in my life hidden from you, I can quite well make my confession with you there, all the more so as I have absolutely nothing troubling me." The priest administered the Last Sacraments, the Count answering all the prayers without the least hesitation. Afterwards he said: "For twenty years I have daily said the prayers for the dying so that on my death-bed I might be able to answer them." Count d'Oultremont could not find words with which to thank his daughter for all her devotedness to him and her constant companionship. He was no longer suffering,

and his soul, formerly so troubled at the thought of death, now awaited that moment with joy.

He retained all his presence of mind, speaking to his daughter affectionately of the Society of Jesus, adding: "It is to you that I leave as legacy my love and devotedness to the Society of Jesus." He then reminded Madame d'Hooghvorst of his intentions with regard to the new church which the Fathers of the college wanted to build.

We will describe the last moments of the Count d'Oultremont in his daughter's own words:

"During Monday evening my father told me that he felt very happy and saw the Blessed Virgin and that she was so beautiful that the sight caused him inexpressible joy. He pointed her out to me and appeared astonished that I saw nothing. No doubt our Blessed Mother, for whom he had always a tender devotion, had come to console him. Until the end he was fully conscious. At 3 o'clock in the morning he asked to see each one, and at 4 o'clock died peacefully."

The whole of Belgium, especially the town of Liège, mourned the death of Count d'Oultremont. His Holiness Pius IX. sent a message of sympathy to Madame d'Hooghvorst, saying that he had said Mass for the repose of her father's soul, while the Very Rev. Father Roothaan, General of the Society of Jesus, wrote her a letter so appreciative of Count d'Oultremont and all he had done for the Society that it was one of her greatest consolations in this time of trial. With the death of Count d'Oultremont there began for Baroness d'Hooghvorst a time of grave decisions accompanied by cruel incertitude and painful struggles. Mother of a family, holding

a position wherein both rank and fortune enabled her to do an immense amount of good, it seemed clearly her duty to fill that position worthily. To throw all aside in order to follow a chimerical ideal seemed, on the contrary, the greatest of illusions and worthy to be condemned. When, therefore, Bishop, family and friends rose up in arms to combat the line of conduct taken by Madame d'Hooghvorst, we can neither blame them, nor be astonished at it. God, however, who is Master of all, was pointing out a road to Madame d'Hooghvorst which others did not see, but which she knew that she must follow. St. Jane Frances de Chantal had in former times acted in the same way. There is no doubt that such an extraordinary vocation demands heroism, but from now until the end of her life, Madame d'Hooghvorst will not cease to be heroic.

The death of Count d'Oultremont had definitely dispersed the guests of Warfusée and Count Théodore remained there alone, the Castle of Presle having fallen to the lot of his brother Charles. At Liège Madame d'Hooghvorst had acquired a large mansion and not far from Warfusée, the Castle of Flamelle. She shortly afterwards disposed of this Castle, when she bought, in Liège itself, the beautiful estate of Bois-l'Evêque, situated on a hill overlooking the Meuse. In the spring of 1852 Madame d'Hooghvorst was staying with her aunt at the Castle of Bauffe. There, for the second time, she met him who was to put an end to all her uncertainty about her vocation. Madame d'Hooghvorst had exchanged but a few words with Father Petit,

then Minister of the College of Brugelette, when he said to her: "Madame, it seems to me that in your soul is a great desire for reparation and that for Jesus, who is so little known, you would willingly become a victim of love." These simple words, which so perfectly expressed her most intimate thoughts and desires, at once set her soul free from the captivity in which it had been held. Though at Liège Father Bossaert had been accused of favouring Madame d'Hooghvorst's attraction to the religious life, in reality he had always crossed her wishes on this point. No one is a prophet in his own country, and Father Bossaert considered that the undertaking proposed by Madame d'Hooghvorst was impossible of realization in Belgium. Why, therefore, give up what was certain for the uncertain, the substance for the shadow? This was the cause of a painful opposition in the soul of Madame d'Hooghvorst between the prudent direction given her by her confessor and that which she believed she was receiving from God.

As in the treatment of the body so in that of the soul, phenomena which escape the ordinary doctor will often draw the attention of one called in merely for consultation. Had Father Petit taken into consideration the good being done by Madame d'Hooghvorst at Liège and the obstacles she would meet with in carrying out her design, his judgment would have been the same as Father Bossaert's. All that Father Petit saw was a soul, and that that soul was being urged by God towards total immolation, and he told her so, without taking into account obstacles of which he knew little.

Still uncertain as to what precisely was the end to which she was tending, but sure that henceforth she would have a guide, Madame d'Hooghvorst made up her mind to give herself up entirely to whatever God was asking of her.

But what was God asking of her? One evening at Liège while praying in the chapel until midnight she besought God to bring her out of the darkness in which this uncertainty enveloped her. She felt imperiously urged towards a life of retirement, prayer and penance, and it seemed to her that St. Ignatius was always holding out to her his rules adding: "You do not know when nor how, but I know." That evening God made her understand that very soon the light would shine forth.

In May, 1853, Madame d'Hooghvorst went to live at Bois-l'Evêque where she possessed a beautiful little chapel which the Bishop of Liège had consecrated and opened to the public. It was during her long hours of prayer at the feet of her Divine Master in this little chapel, that Madame d'Hooghvorst almost imperceptibly saw the end she was aiming at drawing nearer, impossibilities disappearing, while at the same time she felt an invincible courage taking possession of her.

Frequent visits to Bauffe allowed Madame d'Hooghvorst to hold further intercourse with Father Petit, who, extremely reserved, at first excused himself from undertaking the direction of her soul. He asked her, however, to simplify her toilet and no longer to wear jewellery, he also permitted her to practise a few corporal austerities. While quite approving her desire for a more secluded life,

Father Petit was the first to say that, for the moment, this was impossible.

During one of her visits to Bauffe in the summer of 1854, a gleam of joy crossed the path, so harassed with difficulties, of Madame d'Hooghvorst. Madame de Sécus, anxious to prolong the visit of her niece, insisted that her eldest daughter should make her First Communion in the chapel of the Castle. When Olympe heard of the proposal, throwing herself into her mother's arms, she said: "Oh, let me make it here, then it will be a little sooner. I do so long for it." Her governess had remained at Liège, and knowing the pleasure it would give her to be present on the great day, Olympe, with that delicacy of thought and feeling which was so characteristic of her, suggested to her aunt to ask Mademoiselle de St. Martin to come to Bauffe. She came, bringing with her the two brothers, who rejoiced at getting a few days' extra holiday from college for the occasion. The little ceremony took place on July 30th. Father Petit celebrated Mass and Olympe received for the first time Him who is the Friend of the pure of heart. During the morning, Madame d'Hooghvorst, speaking of her daughter to the governess, remarked: "This morning I asked Our Lord that she should never belong to anyone but Him." Happy prayer, which, but four years later, was fully answered.

One day the thought came to Madame d'Hooghvorst, as a light from Heaven, to send her two sons to college in France and then to follow them herself. Once more she was face to face with one of the greatest sacrifices on the road of self-renuncia-

tion, the sacrifice which is nearly always the price to be paid for the grace of a religious vocation. To the soul of Madame d'Hooghvorst God was again repeating the words: "Go forth out of thy country and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee."

Baroness d'Hooghvorst realized at once all that this step would mean, the almost insurmountable difficulties that would have to be overcome, but nothing now could daunt her, and her resolution was taken. She at once informed Father Bossaert of her decision. For some time the Father had felt that his direction was no longer satisfying Madame d'Hooghvorst, for a moment he hesitated on learning of her resolution, then said frankly: "Will you obey me if I advise you to leave your sons in Belgium and remain there yourself?" With an equal frankness Madame d'Hooghvorst replied: "I cannot." She then thanked the Father for all the kindness she had received from him. "At least," replied Father Bossaert, "promise me that I shall never be forgotten in your prayers."

Later the Father acknowledged that the privilege of directing Madame d'Hooghvorst had given him a new outlook on life that had done him more good than he could ever say. Madame d'Hooghvorst, crushed and broken, knelt for his blessing and left him. She felt that a new life filled with suffering and tribulation was opening out before her, and she was not deceived. No sooner had she made known her project of moving to Paris than a veritable storm broke over her head. Every possible plan was set on foot to keep her in Liège, she was

not spared even calumny, but nothing could shake her resolution. Obstacles once dreaded, now seemed rather to animate her courage and she was heard to say, "The possible is accomplished, the impossible will be." Monseigneur de Montpellier, Bishop of Liège, after vainly pleading and remonstrating in turn, dismissed her coldly, in no way disguising his disapproval. This disapproval was all the more painful as the Bishop had been an intimate friend of both Madame d'Hooghvorst's father and husband and had always been very kind to her.

On leaving, he blessed her and told her he was going to ask all the religious communities to pray that she might listen to reason, which she no longer seemed to do. In former days Countess d'Oultremont used to complain to him of her daughter's frequent communions, long prayers, and charitable works, asking him if he could do nothing to lessen her fervour, which her mother believed to be ruining her health; but the Bishop, then Madame d'Hooghvorst's staunch ally, had replied: "My dear Countess, I beg of you, leave your daughter full liberty to do what she wishes in this matter, above all do not prevent her going to Communion, for with that heart, that will, and that head, what might not happen if they did not belong entirely to God?" Shortly after this interview Mgr. de Montpellier brought the Bishop of Bruges, his great friend, to dine with Madame d'Hooghvorst. Once more her conduct and departure were discussed and condemned. It was useless for Madame d'Hooghvorst to say that she would return to Belgium for the summer, they would not believe it. After fur-

ther arguments the two bishops left holding to their own opinion and she to hers.

In the month of October she left Belgium with her two sons; the elder she left in the College at Vannes, the younger, who on account of his health needed a milder climate, she sent to Poitiers. Madame d'Hooghvorst then went on to Paris where she rented a flat in order to be able to say, on her return to Belgium, that all her arrangements having been made there was no reason for putting off her departure.

God was urging Madame d'Hooghvorst towards a life of penance and mortification, in expiation for all the self-seeking there is in the world, and all the machinations of men could not turn her from her purpose.

The year 1854, so full of blessing for the Church and her children, was that in which Our Lady was to shine with a new splendour, and Madame d'Hooghvorst was impatiently awaiting the day when Mary would be proclaimed Immaculate. December 8th found Madame d'Hooghvorst at the Castle of Bauffe on a farewell visit to her aunt. Shortly after breakfast that morning she went up to a tribune of the chapel and remained there three hours. What then passed in her soul, we must let her tell in her own words, though she confesses that it was not easy to express.

"The thought that a new glory was to surround my dearly loved Mother gave me such an indescribable sense of sweetness. Then this loving Mother, as though she would reveal to me a secret of her heart, brought my whole being into a state of great tranquillity. I forgot

completely where I was, whether I was kneeling or sitting, only on returning to my normal state did I realize that I was kneeling. During this time it seemed to me that, in order to enjoy her glory, Mary had given me a little place in Heaven. I saw this divine Mother—when I say I saw, I refer simply to the images which were impressed on the eyes of my soul, and which are still before my mind—crowned by the Blessed Trinity as Queen, as Virgin, and as Mother: Queen of Heaven, Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Ghost; as Mother of God, Queen of the earth; then with the crown of Virgins which seemed very dear to her. She made me understand how much she loved this crown and this title, which cried out to Heaven and earth that God had always been her sole and only love. This thought penetrated to the depths of my soul and I understood how Jesus prizes spotless souls who belong to Him alone, and how He loves to be surrounded by them. Such was the seal of the religious life, that my love for Our Lord longed to give Him, and I asked Mary to tell me what she wanted from me.

She then told me the desire of her heart, and how grateful she would be to me could I realize it. She pointed out to me that Jesus in ascending to Heaven had not left the world, but that in her case it was not the same; that it grieved her Mother's heart not to be there to surround Him, and see that He was surrounded with adoration and respect, tenderness and love; that that which pained her most deeply was to behold the outrages and the sacrileges of every kind with which Jesus was overwhelmed in the Blessed Sacrament, without being able to console Him, or in any way to make reparation. Then her mother's heart told me of her desire to see herself replaced on earth by souls who would have for her Divine Son a deep respect, and a mother's tender love, and that she would be so happy to see Jesus surrounded by such faithful spouses. After which my loving Mother, with a look of supplication,—if I may be permitted to use the word—that I shall never forget, told me that my

maternal heart would understand hers, and that she counted on finding in my heart love enough to give to her Divine Son who had lavished on me so many proofs of His tenderness.

I promised Mary all she asked, for my whole being was penetrated with a feeling of gratitude, love and sorrow. I could only remain silent at her feet, without a word, in that little corner of Heaven to which she had admitted me, but she understood, and she saw at the bottom of my soul, that in spite of my numerous faults, my infidelities, and my miseries, Jesus was my only love and filled my whole heart and life.

I came to myself again, a little astonished, a little weary, but doubly happy, for I knew that Mary had been proclaimed Immaculate. . . When I left the chapel it was striking twelve."

From that day, the day on which the Blessed Virgin was proclaimed Immaculate by the Church, the Society of Mary Reparatrix can date its existence. The form of the future Institute then and there took shape in the mind of the Foundress: its rôle was to gather together souls who, replacing the Blessed Virgin near the Tabernacle, would repair by love, adoration and penance for the outrages and insults with which Our Lord is overwhelmed in the Blessed Sacrament.

On December 20, 1854, Madame d'Hooghvorst bade good-bye to her aunt and her friends at Bauffe and returned to Liège to finish the preparations for her departure.

Acting on the advice of the Archbishop of Tyr, an old friend of the family whom she had met at Bauffe, Madame d'Hooghvorst went, before leaving Liège, to call upon the Bishop, though she well

knew the reception she would meet with. The visit may be described in her own words:

"When I entered the room, quite contrary to his usual custom, the Bishop received me with extreme coldness. I knelt and asked his blessing, to which he replied: 'I do not know whether I ought to bless you; you do not deserve it; you are not only a naughty child but also an unreasonable one. What have you done with your head?' 'But Monseigneur,' I replied, 'I have it still and use it whenever I need it.' 'What is this latest folly I hear of?' This question was accompanied with a gesture of great displeasure. I replied: 'Of what folly do you speak, Monseigneur, for in the eyes of the world I have committed so many, that I do not know to which of them you refer?' 'Brugelette' (which Madame d'Hooghvorst had bought from the Society of Jesus), he answered. 'Why did you let yourself be influenced to such an extent? You are having your head turned.' I replied: 'My Lord, there is only one influence to which I submit and that is the influence of God, and to that I shall submit everywhere and always. As for the follies of which the world reproaches me, I have for a long time now made the world's disapproval my consolation, and its opinion is nothing to me.' "

They exchanged a few more words, and then the Baroness, begging the Bishop's blessing, withdrew. Afterwards Madame d'Hooghvorst learnt that both her visit and her departure had greatly saddened the Bishop. This hurt her, for in spite of the severity he had shown on this occasion, she nevertheless owed him a deep debt of gratitude for having until then always warmly defended her.

That Mgr. de Montpellier was opposed to the Baroness's vocation is beyond question, and there is no point in hiding the fact. Later on, as we shall

see, the Bishop, taught by experience, approved what he had before condemned. This change of opinion is more eloquent than any unquestioned approval.

On December 31, 1854, Madame d'Hooghvorst left Bois-l'Evêque. The break with a brilliant past was complete and irretrievable. The evening of the same day she arrived in Paris. Madame d'Hooghvorst had just shown that in point of energy she yielded to no one. She must have been very sure of a divine call to be able, in face of such general and authorized opposition to continue her way, particularly as she did not yet clearly see where it was leading. Ten years later she wrote to a friend:

"Mgr. de Mérode thinks that I am persistent in my ideas. If one is not persistent, it is impossible to accomplish anything in this world. He, too, holds to his, like everyone else who really wishes to accomplish anything. The Saints have all had a fixed idea; it was that which maintained their progress until they reached their goal."

A noble and beautiful principle, provided that the idea held to be just and true. Was Madame d'Hooghvorst's idea just, and first of all what was her idea? She had been ignorant of it herself until that morning of December 8th spent in the tribune at Bauffe. Then, she had seen something: a company of fervent souls who, in union with Mary Immaculate, would procure glory for God and adoration for the Blessed Sacrament and thus make reparation for sinners. It was a religious order then that she would found. Even to herself she dared

not acknowledge such a design, so superhuman did it seem, with greater reason she dared not confide it to others. Generally speaking those who blamed her knew nothing of what she was undertaking, and even those who approved were ignorant of her real design.

After the closing of the College of Brugelette, Father Petit had been sent to Paris to the residence in the rue de Sèvres. Madame d'Hooghvorst had an intimate conviction that this priest was the one designed by God to be her guide at this period. The Baroness had also met at Brugelette the Reverend Father Studer, Provincial of Toulouse, and had introduced to him her two sons whom she wished to place in French colleges. She appreciated the Provincial's kindness, nor did she fail to note his discretion. She little suspected that he was to be the most loyal supporter of her future Institute.

In the meantime, Madame d'Hooghvorst had taken up her residence in the rue de Grenelle at Bon Lafontaine. She occupied, on the first floor, a flat, large enough, but very different from the mansion she had left. At Bois-l'Evêque the wealthy Baroness had maintained a staff of sixteen servants, with eight or ten horses at her disposal. She had spent her money freely, leaving to her business men the trouble of keeping her accounts. In Paris, she felt that her future work necessitated economy and therefore kept only one old man-servant, a maid-servant, her daughters' maid, and her own faithful Bernadine Hockers. Immediately on her arrival she had fitted up one of the rooms as a chapel and taken advantage of her privilege, obtained from the Holy

See, of having the Blessed Sacrament reserved under her roof in any house where she might have a chapel. Each day Mass was now said there. In the evening, as at Bois-l'Evêque, Madame d'Hooghvorst herself said the night prayers surrounded by her household. Very soon these modest quarters were still further reduced; they moved from the first floor to the second, the latter flat being cheaper, and old Bernard was made cook. Thus passed the winter of 1855. Without precisely mixing in Society, Madame d'Hooghvorst was not able to break entirely with her relations, and these she entertained quietly. Her brother-in-law, the Duke of Bassano, was Grand Chamberlain to the Emperor, and the Baroness had often to make her way to the Tuilleries, were it only in order to be of some assistance to her friends. The poor, too, still took up a great deal of her time, work for the blind having her preference.

On March 19th Marguerite, Madame d'Hooghvorst's youngest daughter, received her First Communion from the hands of Father Studer in the little chapel of Bon Lafontaine. It was a day of rejoicing, with all the intimacy of a family feast, for the little exiled colony. Yet their happiness was overshadowed by the pending sacrifice, which, though old enough to understand, Marguerite was still too young to appreciate.

Until now Madame d'Hooghvorst had revealed her secret to no one. She acknowledged that God wished her to consecrate her life to Him, but she had been silent about the rôle she believed herself called to fulfil. However, on July 4, 1855, under-

standing that the time had come when she must speak, she confided her plan to Father Petit and explained to him what she was meditating. The Father was touched at her disclosure and said to her: "But why did you say nothing to me?" "I do not know," replied the Baroness, "doubtless the hour had not come to break the silence which was weighing on me." For a long while Father Petit questioned his penitent, by whom he was authorized to consult Father Studer.

Father Studer was not an imaginative man; the office he held in his Order guaranteed his prudence, and a chimerical undertaking would find no favour in his eyes. Nevertheless, he listened to the plan laid before him and far from finding fault with it, urged its execution. He did more: the flat in the rue de Grenelle had only been taken provisionally and would soon be quite inadequate; it was, therefore, necessary to find a house more appropriate to the needs of the future Community. Father Studer himself searched and, only after much difficulty, found what they wanted in rue Monsieur, and on October 15th, after lengthy negotiations, Madame d'Hooghvorst signed the lease.

Madame d'Hooghvorst's two sons returned from college for their holidays in May and their first impression was certainly a depressing one. They found their mother surrounded by strangers whose presence alarmed them and whom, they felt, had come between her and them. Happily this impression had not time to last, their mother taking them almost immediately to Belgium, leaving Marguerite, who was ill, at Paris. After spending a short

while in Liège, where she was left more or less at peace, on September 27th, leaving her three eldest children at the Castle of Presle, she returned to Paris to be with her little daughter who was still suffering; there a trial was awaiting her.

Father Studer wished to be quite convinced that Madame d'Hooghvorst was really answering what was a divine call and that she was not being influenced, as so many said, by Father Petit. To assure himself of this he sent Father Petit away from Paris, and it was not without anxiety that Madame d'Hooghvorst saw him go. Three young English ladies, the Misses Henrietta and Lydia Benett, and Miss Coleridge, had expressed a wish to join Madame d'Hooghvorst; the governess of her two daughters, Mlle. de St. Martin, also wished to make part of the little family now coming into existence; but the desire of all was still somewhat hazy and was only perfectly understood by Father Petit. It was he who, crossing Madame d'Hooghvorst's path, as it were by chance, had given her back her peace of mind and soul, making her see clearly what it was that God was asking of her. What would happen if that guide should now fail her, just at the time when, having already promised so much, she had founded nothing? Was she perhaps, after all, mistaken, and those who had opposed her right? Anxious, almost discouraged, but only wanting to do what was right, Madame d'Hooghvorst sought an interview with Father Studer. The Father received her coldly and said: "It is surely not the Baroness d'Hooghvorst who is here; I believe she

does not condescend to ask for things." "No, Father, it is true that the motto of Madame d'Hooghvorst is: ask for nothing, owe nothing, receive nothing; but before you at this moment, you have a child who willingly asks, and who will be happy to owe, and to receive from you whatever you will be good enough to give her." "To that, Child, I am willing to listen," answered the Father, "what do you want of me?" Madame d'Hooghvorst repeated that she wanted direction, which Father Studer consented to give her.

The next day, October 11, 1855, Madame d'Hooghvorst assembled her four companions. She told them frankly of her fears and asked them if they all consented to remain with her even at the risk of a possible check. They assured their Mother (for so they already called her) that they would never leave her, and that together they would bear any suffering the future might hold. Father Studer very soon appreciated the uprightness of Madame d'Hooghvorst. God was bringing into being a new work and she was the instrument He was using; a man may have helped, but her inspiration had a higher source. Once convinced, Father Studer never again doubted; immediately he gave his support both to the work and its Foundress, with a devotedness which never flagged. Nevertheless, he continued to be prudent; although recalled to Paris, Father Petit was kept out of the way, and while strongly upholding Madame d'Hooghvorst, Father Studer did not fail to criticize severely her every project. On November 8, 1855, Father Studer assembled

in the chapel of the rue de Grenelle, Madame d'Hooghvorst and her first companions and encouraged them to perseverance in their undertaking. The same day they received their religious names: reserving to herself that of Mary of Jesus, the Foundress called Miss Henrietta Benett, Mary of St. John; Mlle. de St. Martin, Mary of St. Anne; Miss Lydia Benett, Mary of St. Joseph; Miss Coleridge, Mary of St. Ignatius; Miss Julia Bell, Mary of St. Madeleine. Two co-adjutrix sisters received the names of Marie de la Ste. Enfance and Mary of St. George.

On the 13th November, feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, the little Community removed to the rue Monsieur, and on the 21st the novitiate was opened with a conference given by Father Studer. That day was, as it were, a day of rest for the soul of Madame d'Hooghvorst. Doubtless there yet remained much for her to do, only gradually light came to her, but a great deal had been accomplished and the future looked more hopeful. Chosen souls assembled, the religious life inaugurated, a difficult and critical moment passed, this was enough to embolden the already courageous soul of the Foundress. Wishing, however, to obtain yet more light from Heaven upon her work, Madame d'Hooghvorst withdrew to the Visitation Convent and there, on November 29th, began an eight days' retreat. During this retreat the work of which she had had the first glimpse at Bauffe on December 8, 1854, unveiled itself more fully before her eyes.

We may here quote those notes from this retreat which show most clearly the spirit with which the

Foundress desired to see her future Institute impregnated.

"2nd Day. Then He showed me all His goodness to me, all His love, from my childhood up till now, all the falls from which He had preserved me. At the same time He filled my soul with the deepest regret for having been so often unfaithful. In return for all that I have done for you, He added, you must give Me souls, you must make Me loved by all who come to you. You must choose them pure, or with a heart capable of a love strong enough to purify them. They must all have an unbounded generosity, for the generosity of their love and suffering must make reparation for all the outrages and the daily sacrileges committed against the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Their purity kept, or acquired through struggle and combat, must make reparation for those stains which make a soul so displeasing in My sight and which so deeply wound My Immaculate Mother in her virginal purity. . ."

"At my Communion this morning," she wrote, on December 3rd, "Our Lord came to me as the Good Shepherd wearied with seeking His strayed sheep, and said: 'I am very weary, let Me rest in your heart, which is wholly Mine. There is room in it for Me and for the souls that I shall bring with Me.' With great joy I received my dear Master, who made me understand that on Sundays and feast days He was always more weary and suffering because on those days He was more offended and forgotten. He lovingly asked me to make up to Him, and I understood that these days, which are usually days of rest, should not always be so for souls consecrated to Jesus. . ."

"During these days of recollection, I put everything into the hands of Mary, my loving Mother, asking her what should be the costume of my future daughters, for I wanted everyone, on seeing them, to know at once that they were consecrated to her. I then saw my beloved

Mother, having near her a large number of women whose faces were radiant with purity, with love and with happiness. There was a long file of them and I tried to see where it ended, but Mary said: 'It is much too long for you to see the end, it is useless to try.' Then she called one of these children, who was clothed with a robe of brilliant white and put on her a blue scapular, and completed the costume as we wear it, which is the reason why I can change nothing. Mary recommended me to surround her Divine Son with pure souls, for she wanted around the Tabernacle spotless hearts."

On December 7th, Madame d'Hooghvorst returned to the rue Monsieur, wishing to keep the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the midst of her little family. Two months later, on February 10th, the Foundress received from God yet another intimation on her future Institute which completes those we have already quoted.

"In the evening," we read in her notes, "I went to the chapel, more weary than usual, and I said to Our Lord: 'Jesus, my Beloved, grant me a moment's rest on Thy Heart and some drops of Thy Blood to refresh me. . .' Our Lord granted me this favour and showed me His Heart pierced as it were with a thousand swords and blood flowing from it in abundance; this sight made me suffer intensely, and I remained for a long time heart-broken and silent, not knowing what to do to allay His suffering. After some time Our Lord said to me: 'See how My Heart is torn and my Blood shed uselessly, see how I am outraged by men, and even by souls who, in the eyes of the world, belong to Me. Bring Me back these souls, tell them to have pity on your Jesus, employ all your sweetness and patience, your strength and devotedness in making Me loved. In order to give Me a soul, never spare yourself, and let all your children know how to sacrifice themselves for Me. Withdraw these

swords from My torn and bleeding Heart and let your children, by their sufferings, their prayers, their zeal, strive also to withdraw them. But do not forget that to be able to make reparation for the faults of others, to be able to pour consolation into the Wounds of My Heart, their souls must be so pure and white that My Eyes can rest upon them without being wounded.' I remained there for a very long time, deeply impressed by all that I had seen and heard, then I said to Our Lord: 'Is it really true, my Jesus, that Thou hast need of me and this work?' And, suddenly, I seemed to be before the throne of God; blinded by such dazzling purity and light, I remained prostrate seeing nothing; then Our Lord made me look up, and showed me a large number of virgins dressed in white, emblem of purity, with something angelic in their expression. There was a long line of them and I did not see the end . . . and Our Lord showed me that this purity was what He wanted for their souls."

Thus, when towards the end of 1856 her companions raised the question of the habit of the future Institute, the Foundress declared without hesitation that their dress should be white and the scapular blue.

Again on August 15th, Madame d'Hooghvorst writes:

"Afterwards Mary showed herself to me as a tender Mother, reminding me of all the love and care with which she had surrounded me from my earliest childhood, showing me that it was she who had protected me from so many dangers, and who had kept me for her Divine Son. 'I have kept you for my Divine Son,' she said, 'but now you must be faithful to Him, you must give Him souls. . . I have kept you, and I will keep you, with all your children, who will be mine in proportion to their fidelity to my Divine Son. Form them to the interior life, to tranquillity of soul, to be kind and charit-

able to one another, but to live alone with my Son and with me. There must be no hurry, preoccupation or agitation,and the noise of the world should be altogether banished from their hearts.' Then Our Lord and His Blessed Mother seemed to show me these souls. . . They appeared serious and reserved without austerity, simple and calm, thoughtful and kind without affectation, penetrated with a profound respect for all things holy, and with a deep humility before God and the Blessed Sacrament. . ."

Madame d'Hooghvorst's two daughters having all this time remained with her in Paris, the arrival of her new companions necessitated larger accommodation. At the far side of the garden facing the rue de Babylon there was a small house to let. This Madame d'Hooghvorst procured in the summer of 1856, and arranged it to meet the needs of her little Community. To the world Madame d'Hooghvorst was an enigma. Everything about her seemed strange and incomprehensible, her house, half mansion and half convent; her life, partly mundane, partly religious. Before being a Foundress she was a mother, and nothing could dispense her from bringing up her children who were still young. She gave as much of the day as she could to the Community, but usually took her meals with her children. Each year she took them to Belgium and often accompanied them on their various visits. An upright judgment would have recognized in this manner of acting an admirable broad-mindedness, and would have praised the way in which no duty was neglected; the way in which two rôles, apparently so irreconcilable, were united. But gossips thought more fit to scoff. They little knew the cruel struggle

that was going on in the mother's heart, who was judged by some to be so hard, and by others so little of a religious.

"The thought of my children," writes Madame d'Hooghvorst, "whom I should have to leave, was real torture to my heart, and the cause of a struggle which God and my confessor alone knew. I shall never forget the day when my heart swept away every other consideration, and I declared to Father Petit that it was impossible, I could never leave my children. The Father tried to calm me, to make me listen to reason, to show me by all that had happened, by everything around me, that I had to overcome myself. I felt that I had not the strength, and in tears I said to him: 'Father, ask Our Lord that I may not be obliged to make this sacrifice.' Seeing the suffering that this prolonged struggle was causing me, the Father replied firmly: 'You are no longer free to choose. You must consent at once to the sacrifice that God is asking of you, and which He wishes to see accomplished.' I submitted, but it will never be known what that act cost me. I promised never again to refer to that particular suffering and I never did."

To inaugurate their new life Madame d'Hooghvorst had asked Father Studer to give a retreat to her little Community. The Provincial accepted, then, in order to submit the new work to yet another trial, and to reassure himself that no illusion was slipping into it, he withdrew, sent Father Petit to Laval, and ordered Madame d'Hooghvorst to accept the direction of an unknown Father, Father de Montézon.

"I confess," wrote Madame d'Hooghvorst, "that I had need of a great spirit of faith to submit to this, and what helped me also was the determination to reach my goal which was the organization of a work such as Mary had

shown me. The desired haven was, for me, the religious life which at any price I had to reach, and to possess which too much could not be asked of me."

The end of this retreat found Father de Montézon fully approving and endorsing the desires of Madame d'Hooghvorst and the plan of the future Institute. At last even Father Studer was satisfied that Madame d'Hooghvorst's work was divinely inspired, and he wrote to her as follows:

"Your work, then, has been recognized as good, praiseworthy, holy, inspired by God. That is the all-important thing. I am more delighted than I can ever tell you. Let us thank Jesus and Mary a thousand times. Though the devil may do all in his power to prevent its accomplishment, though he may raise up innumerable difficulties in your way, nevertheless you will go boldly forward in the path marked out for you and ultimately this work, divinely inspired, will be accomplished. Yes, my very dear child, I believe Our Lord wants your Institute. Work at it then with courage and confidence. Consider yourself as nothing, absolutely nothing, then you will be the instrument of Providence. You will help the children who surround you, but see that they are well formed, simple, humble, and unselfish. . ."

Before Madame d'Hooghvorst could take any further step it was necessary that her plan and projects should be made known at Rome. There she hoped that the memories left by her father would prove useful to her. Providence was to furnish the means for carrying out her desire. In the month of June, 1856, His Eminence, the Cardinal Patrizi, whom Madame d'Hooghvorst knew, and who had been a friend of her father, came to Paris for the baptism of the Prince Royal. Father Studer very

much wished to draw up at once an abridged plan of the work, and Madame d'Hooghvorst sought an audience with the Cardinal. The Cardinal received her with great kindness and spoke to her of his brother, the Marquis Patrizi, whom Madame d'Hooghvorst knew well. She then made known to him her desire and asked if she might call to say good-bye to him before he left Paris. He replied: "Yes, come, and bring me your plan in writing and a letter for the Holy Father. As soon as I arrive I will deliver them to him myself." The Cardinal also promised to give the Foundress all the support he possibly could. Madame d'Hooghvorst does not mention the fact, or did not know, that after her audience the Cardinal said to his friends: "Have we here a second St. Chantal in the making?" The Cardinal was as good as his word, and eight days after his arrival in Rome he informed Madame d'Hooghvorst that her request had been presented to the Pope. Towards the end of July Madame d'Hooghvorst received a letter from Mgr. Fioramonti, Secretary of Latin Letters to His Holiness, which, while assuring her of the Holy Father's paternal interest and affection, informed her that before Rome could set its seal of approval on the new Institute it must first be known and approved by the Bishops of one or more dioceses. Their approbation and consent having been procured and the rules examined, only then could the Holy See approve and encourage the work. Another letter from Mgr. Fioramonti in December bringing once more the Holy Father's blessing and encouragement, referred again to the necessity of a house

being canonically established in a diocese under episcopal jurisdiction. The Holy Father's kindly interest made this necessity all the more pressing, and Madame d'Hooghvorst, with her usual energy, wished to set to work at once, but she saw the undertaking beset with so many difficulties that she wondered how they could ever be overcome. She could, doubtless, easily have retired to her estate of Bois-l'Evêque where Mgr. de Montpellier was awaiting her, but the very reasons which had driven her to leave Belgium now prevented her from returning to Liège. To found a house in Paris was not easy, there her family connections would rather have hindered than helped her. Happily God, in His Providence, came to her rescue. On August 14th Madame d'Hooghvorst had received a new and fervent postulant in the person of Mlle. Thérèse Sucher. She belonged to Hagueneau near Strasburg. Mlle. Sucher had a great devotion to Our Lady of Marienthal and frequently went on pilgrimage to this popular shrine where she knew a priest, her confessor, Father Werner. On hearing of Madame d'Hooghvorst's difficulty she said to her: "Our Blessed Lady of Marienthal must settle the matter. I think that with her help we could begin at Strasburg, allow me to write to Father Werner." On December 8th Father Werner came to Paris where he stayed two days: he talked things over with Father Studer and Father Petit, S.J., and left, giving the Foundress and her companions every hope of success. Immediately on his return to Strasburg, he called at the Bishop's House and laid the plan of the new Institute before Mgr. Raess and his

assistant priests. It was unanimously accepted, and the Bishop sent a message to the Foundress telling her that he was awaiting her in Strasburg where he would be pleased to welcome her. Madame d'Hooghvorst accepted the Bishop's offer, and on December 27, 1856, set out for Strasburg with Mlle. Sucher. His Lordship sent his carriage to the station to meet the travellers and received them with every token of kindness. For a long while they talked and then the Bishop re-read the plan of the Institute, signed it and gave it back to the Foundress, assuring her of the warm welcome accorded to her in his Episcopal city.

"In the plan of the Society," writes Madame d'Hooghvorst, "Monseigneur saw that our two-fold aim as Reparatrixes was prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed for twelve hours each day, and retreats given to ladies."

The Bishop was just establishing in his diocese Perpetual Adoration; this devotion coming from Rome, had its origin in the diocese of Liège, where it had been introduced, in 1765, by Madame d'Hooghvorst's great-grand-uncle, the Prince Bishop d'Oultremont. The Bishop of Strasburg reminded her of this and with great kindness told her that he was glad to see devotion to the Blessed Sacrament continued in her family.

It was finally decided that the little Community should make a trial of three months at Strasburg, and that on May 1st the religious habit, so ardently desired, should be given to them. Before leaving Strasburg Madame d'Hooghvorst made a pilgrim-

age to Our Lady's shrine at Marienthal. After her departure, Mlle. Sucher searched for, and found, not without difficulty, a suitable house for the Community in the rue des Pierres.

During the first days of January Madame d'Hooghvorst left Paris with all her companions, and they took up their abode in their new country. A small chapel was arranged, and Monseigneur permitted the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, whilst expressing a wish to come himself to bless the chapel and celebrate the first Mass.

They were hardly settled in their new quarters before several young people sought admission amongst them.

Madame d'Hooghvorst could not, for the moment, prolong her stay at Strasburg, for she was not yet entirely free, and His Lordship, who had perfectly understood her position, gave her permission to leave the enclosure in order to look after her children. At the time, her eldest son, then seventeen, was ill in Paris, and she could not leave him for any length of time.

Her children, seeing the step she had resolved to take, were wounded in their most legitimate affections; they felt they were being left more or less alone, whilst from every side they heard their mother blamed, and her and her work scoffed at. All this obliged Madame d'Hooghvorst to make every possible concession, and to surround them more than ever with care and affection.

The clothing of Madame d'Hooghvorst and her ten companions having been fixed for May 1st, she left for Strasburg on April 20th accompanied by her

daughter Olympe. The ceremony was preceded by an eight days' retreat.

It had been decided that in the Society, the future novice at her clothing should never appear in bridal dress, but in the simple black dress of her postulantship. It was suggested, however, that on this occasion only, Olympe, wearing white, should thus represent them all.

On the morning of May 1st, so eagerly awaited, the part of the chapel reserved for the public was crowded to overflowing. Madame d'Hooghvorst and her companions entered the chapel together under the guidance of their little patron. Already very tall and graceful, attired in a beautiful, though simple, white dress, with a long tulle veil and crown of flowers, her face radiating innocence and purity, there was something angelic in the whole of Olympe's appearance, and her recollected and modest bearing struck all present. After a sermon delivered by the Bishop, and the blessing of the habits, all went up to the altar rail to receive the veil from His Lordship. Olympe's hand was seen to tremble as she passed the first veil to the Bishop who placed it on the head of her mother. Tears filled the eyes of all at the sight of the young child taking such an intimate part in the sacrifice of the mother whom she so dearly loved, and who was soon to contract with her beloved daughter yet stronger ties than those of flesh and blood. Even the Bishop could not altogether hide his emotion.

In her diary Madame d'Hooghvorst writes:

"I was happy that day (of her clothing) yet at the same time my heart was sore. I knew, saw and felt that I

was breaking every family tie, and my heart was full at the thought of my children. I saw Olympe giving me the veil, and wondered what would become of that child who was dearer to me than life, where would she be one day, and what distance would separate us. I felt this so deeply, that I do not think that without a special grace from God, I could have borne it. Yet somehow I felt in the depths of my soul that Olympe would give herself to Him and to His Mother. Monsieur d'Hooghvorst had told me when dying that his first request to Our Lord would be that his children should consecrate themselves to God. I felt, though hardly believing it, that that prayer would be granted, and that one day Olympe would bear her father's name in religion. The 1st of May, then, was a day of rejoicing for my soul, but of bitterness for my heart. I had thus to buy the grace I had received, and for that grace it was not too dear a price."

MOTHER MARY OF JESUS.

PART II

CHAPTER I

MOTHER MARY OF JESUS

OLYMPE'S CLOTHING—FIRST VOWS OF MOTHER MARY OF JESUS—MARGUERITE'S VOCATION.

DURING the ceremony of clothing the Bishop had addressed the postulant with the words: "Henceforth you will no longer be called Emilie d'Oultremont, but Mary of Jesus." But the heart of Mary of Jesus remained the heart of a mother, and God was to lavish on this soul, chosen to make reparation, all those sufferings which pierce a mother's heart, all those graces which sanctify the soul of a religious.

The four children of Mother Mary of Jesus soon realized that the fact of their mother becoming a religious had robbed them of none of her affection and loving care. She carefully watched over her two sons and surrounded them with affection until she saw them both happily married, and they, on their part, were to the end of her life her staunch supporters. The two girls had always remained with her. At first, no doubt, as children loved and loving, they had felt somewhat jealous of the strangers, who, one by one, came to join their mother, but gradually the two children began to take a lively interest in the little Community that was growing and, though their lives were lived apart, the happiest relations existed between them.

As we have shown, Olympe loved her mother passionately and could not be uninterested in all that was going on. Anything in the way of change and novelty was a delight to the child, and to her, her mother's change of residence from Belgium to Paris had been an excitement, in which her lively spirits revelled. Upon their arrival Olympe took the keenest interest in all that concerned the arranging of their new apartments and, even then, often showed a maturity and sagacity far beyond her years. The two sisters were inseparable, and towards Marguerite, who was always delicate, Olympe showed the most tender solicitude.

While negotiations were in progress between Strasburg and Paris, Olympe had accompanied her mother several times to Strasburg. There, as at Paris, she had entered whole-heartedly into all the preparations necessary before the little Community was finally settled, and her gaiety and lovable ways endeared her to all. She would go out with the Sister to the market with a large basket hanging on her arm, and great was her joy on her return to open one side of the lid and proudly display before her mother's eyes the head of a large fish, which she would still more proudly tell her she had got cheaply! Child as she was, she realized that her mother could no longer spend money with the lavishness of former days, for the needs of the future Institute necessitated the strictest economy.

On May 2nd, before leaving Strasburg, Olympe had begged her mother to allow her to make one more pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Marienthal. There, she said with an air of mystery,

she wanted to ask the Blessed Virgin to keep her in her present frame of mind. At the same time she wished to offer to Our Lady her prettiest ring which was set with blue and white stones. "So that she will not forget me," she added; her mother willingly consented; the child had cried so much the night before that her mother thought she had need of a little consolation, all the more so as it was believed that her grief was due to her mother's decision. Olympe returned, delighted with her visit to Marienthal, but said nothing of her secret. Shortly after their return to Paris, however, an incident occurred which perhaps gave Mother Mary of Jesus an inkling of what was in her daughter's mind.

Olympe and Marguerite had gone to pass the evening at the Palace of the Tuilleries with their aunt, the Duchess of Bassano; they were wearing charming frocks of white muslin trimmed with rose-coloured ribbon and it must be acknowledged that they looked very pretty.

When they returned, Madame d'Hooghvorst said:

"Well, Pia, have you enjoyed yourself this evening?" "No, the world wearies me and I find nothing in it." "What! The world wearies you! You are so young still and you are wearing such a pretty dress to-night." "Yes, I do enjoy myself with auntie and my cousins, and besides my dress is pretty, that possibly is all true, but . . . I would love to have one that is quite pure white. . ."

This allusion to the colour of the habit worn by the new religious was easily understood, but the conversation ended there.

From her private notes we gather that Mother Mary of Jesus always secretly cherished in her heart the hope that one or other, if not all, of her children would consecrate their lives to God, but on this point she in no way influenced them. The boys at college and the two girls with their nurse and governess, and the constant companionship of their mother, led the normal, happy, healthy lives of children of their position.

At Strasburg the Mother Foundress had left the novices for whom she had procured the peace of the religious life, and her time was now divided between this house and that of Paris. The installation in the rue des Pierres at Strasburg had been only provisional; in August, 1857, Mother Mary of Jesus managed to procure a property in the rue Ste. Elisabeth which had once been an old Dominican Convent. It was a large and convenient dwelling, though situated in a very Protestant quarter of the town, and on October 1st the Community were able to move into their new home.

At Paris, in the empty convent of the rue Monsieur, Mother Mary of Jesus began to think of establishing another regular Community. But first she had to warn her relatives of this new move. Her first step was to visit the Duchess of Bassano at the Tuilleries and tell her of her decision. The Duchess, though at first somewhat taken aback, did not entirely disapprove and asked her if she could speak of her decision to others. Mother Mary of Jesus replied, "Oh, yes, certainly, I do not want to make any mystery about it. Very soon the whole

of Belgium will hear what I have done. It is quite impossible to hide it any longer."

Having warned her friends and acquaintances, it remained for the Mother Foundress to obtain the authorization of the Archbishop of Paris. At her second audience Cardinal Morlot, who had received the Mother Foundress with paternal kindness, said to her: "I give you permission for all that the Bishop of Strasburg allows you. Warn me," he added, "of the arrival of your religious so that I may come and bless them." Three religious were immediately sent for from Strasburg—Mother Mary of St. John being made the first Superior of the Paris house, and on August 15th the first clothing in the new foundation took place.

Mother Mary of Jesus had, now, to take her children to Belgium for their holidays. They first went to the Castle of Presle to their uncle Charles, and at Liège saw a great many friends. Monseigneur de Montpellier assured her that Mother Mary of Jesus would always remain the Emilie he had known and loved from childhood. Everywhere she was favourably received; perhaps when she was no longer there to hear, people spoke of her with less sympathy.

In October, the Mother Foundress stopped at Saint Acheul to see Father Petit. She was accompanied by Olympe, who was delighted to see the Father to whom she had gone to confession ever since her first Communion, but her mother never for a moment dreamt that on this occasion the child had anything particular to say to the priest; Olympe, however, asked to see Father Petit alone.

After a long interview the Father informed Mother Mary of Jesus that her daughter, after serious reflection, wished to consecrate herself to God in the religious life.

"I cannot tell," writes Mother Mary of Jesus, "my joy on hearing this news. I thanked Our Lord and told the Father how glad I was that I had brought Olympe with me." "You have every reason to be so," replied the Father, "for her silence was weighing on her, and in spite of knowing that she would be well received by you, something stopped her telling you until she had the chance of ascertaining from me if her thought and desire really came from God."

"The next day," continued the Mother Foundress, "we set out on our journey. The evening of my arrival in Paris I had just gone to bed when my daughter came in and kneeling beside me said: 'I waited until you had gone to bed to come and talk to you, I have something to ask you. I do hope you will say yes. In any case I must tell you.' I asked her to tell me all that was in her mind. Olympe then opened her heart entirely to her mother, then she added: 'Ever since you took the habit last May I have regretted that I did not receive it with you and I entreat you to let me do so next May. It would make me so happy. I feel that Jesus is calling me to Him and I cannot refuse Him, His voice is too sweet and gentle for me to be able to say no, and you will not say it either I hope. I should be terribly unhappy if you did; however, I shall do just as you wish. I have already suffered so much that I think if I had had to keep silence any longer I should have become ill.' "

Touched at the work of grace in the soul of her child, the Mother Foundress, however, made every objection to her proposal that the prudence of her maternal heart could suggest. But to each objec-

tion Olympe replied so wisely and so supernaturally that Mother Mary of Jesus was convinced of the reality of her daughter's vocation. With a charming simplicity Olympe said to her mother:

"What I long for, above all, is to give myself to Jesus quite young. It is the flower in all its freshness He wants, not the faded rose, and do you not think, Mamma, He will love me just a little bit more for having given myself to Him before the world has touched my soul?"

She then begged her mother to take her to Belgium in the coming winter, as, there, she would see all her relations and could tell them what she had decided.

"I will tell everyone," she affirmed, "that I am becoming a nun because I want to, because it is to my liking, and that you have never spoken to me about it, for I wish them to understand that it is I and not you, who have made this decision."

Thus was disclosed the secret that, six months earlier, Olympe had entrusted to Our Lady of Marienthal. She had kept it courageously until her director had confirmed it, and time tested it. Foreseeing the storm that would break once her resolution was made known to her relations, and the suffering it would mean for her mother, she took upon herself the whole responsibility of her choice, all the consequences of which she had weighed with astonishing maturity. All this was ample proof of the seriousness with which Olympe had considered her vocation, so her mother acceded to her wishes and promised to take her to Belgium the following winter.

On January 20, 1858, the Mother Foundress and Olympe left for Brussels. As expected, the storm broke on every side; everywhere Mother Mary of Jesus was blamed, her family tried to frighten her in order to make her withdraw her permission and to dissuade her daughter from the step she was contemplating. But it was all useless, and nothing altered the determination of either of them. The entire family were in despair at seeing Olympe leaving them, while *she* left Brussels happy to have broken every tie. A few days spent with her brother Charles were a consolation for Mother Mary of Jesus. Though he well knew that the Mother Foundress was being accused of forcing her daughter to become a nun in order to secure her fortune, yet he and his wife were the first to say that much as they regretted losing Olympe, it was only right that if she had a religious vocation, she should be left free to follow it.

They left Brussels not sorry to have done with the world. Here another sorrowful encounter awaited the loving hearts of mother and sister, for her two brothers were terribly grieved at Olympe's decision; she had always been their companion and they loved her dearly. They were heard to say: "If Pia goes into the Convent, we shall see no more of Mamma; she, too, will soon shut herself up and never come out again." It was a period of intense suffering for Mother Mary of Jesus. She felt that soon her younger daughter would follow her sister's example and she could not bear to think that her two sons would be left without the affection of either mother or sister.

Always generous, Olympe asked that she might make her novitiate at a distance from her mother, who, upon this, took her daughter to Strasburg at the beginning of March. Mother Mary of Jesus remained there ten days then went back to Paris. She writes:

"Olympe was very brave, not a word, not a tear in my presence, but our hearts felt the separation none the less! . . . I had need of all the love that Jesus had put into my heart for Him, as well as of all my natural energy."

The void made by Olympe's departure necessitated Mother Mary of Jesus giving yet more time to her other children and less to her religious Community. This gave rise to the criticism that the Mother Foundress "changed her costume as it came into her head." In April, Mother Mary of Jesus returned again to Strasburg, where after eight days' retreat, she was to pronounce her first vows, and at the same time to give the habit to her daughter, who had come to the end of her fervent postulantship. Once more Monseigneur Raess officiated, while Mother Mary of Jesus placed the white veil on the head of her daughter who would no longer be called Olympe d'Hooghvorst, but Mary of St. Victor (the name of her father). The Novice was radiant. In her diary, Mother Mary of Jesus writes:

"Her joy did me good; I gave her to Jesus with the greatest happiness, it was a fresh flower I could offer to Him that the world had neither touched nor tarnished, and in offering her to the Divine Master I was somewhat consoled for having given Him so little when I gave myself."

During that day of May 1st, mother and daughter both wore the white veil of Novices. Towards evening the Mother Foundress asked Mary of St. Victor if she were happy.

"Oh! yes Mother," replied the novice of fifteen, "I have only one regret, and that is not to have given myself a year sooner to Our Lord."

The next day, Mother Mary of Jesus, with her ten companions of the previous year, presented themselves at the altar, there to bind themselves irrevocably to the Divine Master. Mary of St. Victor standing at the side of her mother passed to Monseigneur Raess the blue veil, heart and crucifix which Mother Mary of Jesus received from the hands of the Bishop.

Before Communion, when the Mother Foundress pronounced her vows, her daughter, standing near her, held the candle of Profession. Not far from the sanctuary, Marguerite d'Hooghvorst followed with great attention the smallest details of the ceremony, perhaps already considering in her heart her own immolation.

Mother Mary of Jesus rejoiced to think that with her vows her sacrifice was accomplished, but it did not free her from a mother's poignant solicitude for her children. Until their marriage her two sons were her constant preoccupation. Adrian, the eldest, was married in Rome the following year.

At the end of the year 1859, Marguerite, who was returning from her holidays in Belgium, joined her mother at Strasburg from where they were going on to Paris together. Whilst in Belgium Mar-

guerite had heard both her mother and sister universally blamed, so there did not seem to be much likelihood that, on her return, she would, in any way, wish to follow Olympe's example. A few days after her arrival her mother told her that soon she would have a new and excellent governess, but the child received the news impassively, even showing annoyance. Though delighted to see her mother again, Marguerite spoke little, yet always sought to be alone with her. Her mother tried to put her at her ease and make her talk.

On Christmas Day Marguerite entered her mother's room, accompanied by one of the nuns, who said to Mother Mary of Jesus:

"Mother, I have brought Marguerite to you, she wishes to speak to you, but as she dare not begin I told her I would warn you."

Mother Mary of Jesus then asked the child if anything was troubling her. In reply Marguerite threw herself into her mother's arms and said sobbing:

"Please give me to God, let me stay with you and Olympe and see no more of the world."

Surprised, the mother mingled her tears with those of her child and tried to calm her. A little reassured she continued:

"You will not, I hope, say no, since you said yes to Olympe, who was even younger than I."

Mother Mary of Jesus replied:

"But is it really true that you wish to become a nun? Is it not because you are here in the Convent under religious influence? I can hardly believe such a life is to your taste."

At these words Marguerite again began to cry, saying:

"You will not make me so unhappy as to refuse me, for if I ask you this, it is after having thought about it well. I am sorry for all I said in disapproval of you and Olympe, but then the religious life was little to my liking though I felt something in my soul urging me towards it. The thought of seeing you less frequently, of being alone in the world made me so miserable that I was displeased and annoyed at everything you did."

Mother Mary of Jesus then told her daughter that they would shortly return to Paris; that there she would reconsider everything, and, if it proved to be really God's will, she would allow her to follow her vocation. With this Marguerite had to be content and her one idea was to get back to Paris where the momentous question would be decided.

Two or three days after their return, Marguerite gathered together all her little private possessions, (those possessions so dear to a young girl in the world) including her jewellery, carried them to her mother whom she asked to distribute them saying that she had no longer any use for that kind of thing. She then begged her mother to allow her to enter the Convent. Marguerite had always lived with her governess and her maid in a house quite separate from the Community. At length Mother Mary of Jesus consented to her daughter's repeated request, and on January 12, 1860, to her great joy, she was admitted into the enclosure wearing the black dress of a postulant.

On January 18th, Mother Mary of Jesus left for Brussels. Marguerite, unlike her sister, had no wish

at all to say good-bye or give any explanation to her relatives before her entrance into the Convent. Consequently the storm of disapproval Mother Mary of Jesus had now to face was almost greater than it had been in the case of Olympe. She was again accused of forcing her daughter into a Convent, of sacrificing her to her own interests. Such was their exasperation that she was warned that a family council was to be assembled which was going to declare her incapable of managing her own affairs. The whole of Brussels was stirred up against her, and complaints were even lodged with the Minister of Public Worship and with the Archbishop of Mechlin. The matter did not stop in Belgium; everything was done to create mischief in Rome. The General of the Society of Jesus was written to, and advised to withdraw those Fathers interested in the work of the Mother Foundress, on the grounds that it was dangerous for them to be mixed up in such an affair, and that the children of Mother Mary of Jesus were going to be taken from her as she was incapable of looking after them. The Mother Foundress, however, wrote herself to Rome and her explanation elucidated everything.

For Mother Mary of Jesus it was a horrible thought that they should have tried to take her daughters from her, especially as they had threatened to put them into a boarding school where there would be no question of religion, in order, as they said to her "that they may get rid of all the mad ideas you have put into their heads."

God is never outdone in generosity, and if Mother Mary of Jesus was ready to sacrifice every-

thing, even the children whom she loved more than life itself, in order to follow His will, He on His part was watching over His generous and faithful Reparatrix. In spite of all the fury let loose against her, in spite of the many plans devised to destroy the work she had undertaken, God permitted that nothing should come of it all. Through all this persecution her brother Charles, alone, had always warmly defended her and he managed to put things in their true light, so that even those who opposed the Mother Foundress the most bitterly were eventually forced to keep silence.

Mother Mary of Jesus had promised St. Ignatius, that if he settled her difficulties for her she would go on a pilgrimage to Loyola in thanksgiving. The Saint granted her request.

This final storm had brought the Mother Foundress, at last, safely into the haven of the religious life, liberated from every obligation to her family, and from the management of her fortune, the administration of which she had handed over to her brother Charles. In future he alone would be the only member of her family she would visit when business or other important matters might necessitate it.

When, on June 21, 1864, Mother Mary of Jesus was present at the marriage of her second son in the Chapel of the Nunciature, Madame d'Hooghvorst made her last appearance in Society, and ended the necessity of playing any longer in public her rôle of mother. Till the end of her life she kept in touch with both her sons who never withdrew themselves from her influence.

MOTHER MARY OF ST. VICTOR. MOTHER MARY OF ST. JULIENNE.

CHAPTER II

MOTHER MARY OF ST. JULIENNE

Her Life and Death.

Meanwhile the little postulant who had been the cause of so much disturbance, supremely happy in the novitiate, was congratulating herself afresh each day on the step she had taken. A friend of hers had entered the Convent at the same time as Marguerite, and on March 19, 1860, the feast of St. Joseph, to whom Marguerite always had a great and tender devotion, they received the habit together, Marguerite taking the name of St. Julienne in memory of St. Julienne of Cornillon, the Saint of Liège. Great was the joy of the Mother Foundress on seeing both her daughters arrayed in Mary's livery.

A few days later, on March 26th, that year the Feast of the Annunciation, Mary of St. Victor pronounced her first vows, which were received by Father Petit.

Mary of St. Julienne made her novitiate in Toulouse, where a house had been recently founded, and where her sister Mary of St. Victor was Assistant. Those who were present at the ceremony of her first vows on January 11, 1862, Feast of the Holy Name, were deeply impressed at the sight of the young novice of sixteen presenting herself at the altar between her mother and sister. The two children were then radiant with health; Mary of St. Victor, tall like her mother, was also as

highly gifted. Very artistic, she painted beautifully, and to her other charms was added that of a magnificent voice. With an energetic will and a reliable judgment, it seemed as though she were destined by God to carry on the work of the Mother Foundress when she would be no longer there; certainly, on this Mother Mary of Jesus built all her hopes. It was her eldest daughter's vocation that had reassured her as to the future of the Institute. She relied upon her, and thus her heavy burden of responsibility was lightened. Her humility and the sense of her own misery made her count on this human support.

Mary of St. Julienne was no less loved by her mother, nor did she deserve to be. Mother Mary of Jesus had so often feared to lose her younger daughter, and it had only been her loving and constant care that had enabled her to bring up her little Maguey, towards whom she was always tenderly indulgent. Her very name would bring a smile to her mother's face.

Not a trace of her previous delicacy was to be seen in Mary of St. Julienne. Nearly as tall as her sister, she looked as strong. Her frequent illnesses as a child had often interrupted her lessons, and made her lose whatever interest she might have had; her mother, therefore, wished her to complete her studies. Her childish face contrasted with her serious, almost solemn manner, and she possessed a keenness of judgment rarely found in one so young. Mary of St. Julienne was kindness itself; years of suffering had developed in her a tender sympathy for the sorrows and sufferings of others,

she seized every opportunity of helping her sisters. She was heart and soul in her religious life outside of which nothing interested her. While Mary of St. Victor was the support of the Mother Foundress, in Mary of St. Julienne she found her rest and joy. When, at rare intervals, the three chanced to be alone together, their unfeigned delight made their usual reserve appear all the more meritorious. At Olympe's entrance into religion, Marguerite had said: "The world holds nothing more for me, half my life has been taken from me, nothing interests me now that Pia is no longer here." Some months later, when, after prayer and serious reflection, she followed the example of her beloved sister of whom she had been the inseparable companion since babyhood, their affection was still further strengthened and deepened.

The contrast between the two sisters was as marked in their new life as it had been in the old: Mary of St. Julienne was always drawn towards a hidden life, and humility was her favourite virtue. To be passed over unnoticed was for her a real joy; as a novice she had written: "My one desire is to live in the background." Her mother recognized in this attraction of Mary of St. Julienne for a hidden and humble life, an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and by word and writing encouraged her daughter to follow it, as a letter written to her shortly after her vows shows. The Mother Foundress writes:

"You want a word from me, dear little child, and willingly I send you one. What shall I say to you, except that I am delighted to see my darling child so gay; it does

my heart good and I am sure that the Heart of Jesus also is consoled for He loves to see souls serving Him with joy and love. Go on then, dear little one, giving your whole heart to Jesus with that simple gladness which is His consolation and which is, and must always be, your peace, your joy, your rest. Little child, remain very little and Jesus will hide you always in His Heart, where you will be much better off than anywhere else, for in the Heart of Jesus, our whole life is nothing but joy and happiness."

On another occasion she writes:

"I received your letter yesterday evening, my dear and much loved little child, and I want to answer it at once, as I think you desire. So you are going to enter into retreat, and your soul, which belongs to Jesus, wishes to be still more united to Him by taking away anything which could, I will not say displease Him, for that is done already, at least with your will, but which could in any way sadden Him.

What shall I say to you, dear child, from our beloved Master, so that your soul which is doubly dear to me, remain always, always very near Him? First, I should like you not to show so much annoyance when anything happens contrary to your desires; it can nearly always be seen by the expression of your face, or your way of answering. When you are not well, I want you to let yourself be taken care of more simply, putting aside also that look of annoyance when something is done for your good, or when you are made to take an exception which is useful or necessary for your health. That is what I want to see changed in you; it is neither serious nor difficult, so there is not the least reason to be discouraged about it, nor even saddened; that I do not wish you to be. Your soul, your heart, your will free and quite at ease; always very confident in the Master's tender love, that is what your heart must be; very calm, very full of Our Lord, of His mercy, that is what your soul must be. A doubt, an

apprehension, the shadow of a fear, never, never that for you, it is forbidden.

For your penances, dear little child, I can only grant you one thing and that is the hair-belt until mid-day; I do not know what penances you do, so I cannot let you do more without knowing, and I have forgotten what I allowed you. With regard to the iron belt, no; the iron discipline, no; besides, my dear little child, I think that I have allowed you enough for your strength. During your retreat, if you like, say five Aves with your arms extended in the form of a cross, in honour of the five wounds of the dear Master, and kiss the ground five times. Is this not a long letter of direction?... I bless you with all the tenderness of my heart and I will pray very much for you, dear child."

More of a contemplative, Mary of St. Julienne spent every free moment in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, and God sanctified her soul in the way that she had chosen by hidden suffering and humiliation, then called her soon to her eternal union with Him. Often when Mary of St. Victor had looked in vain for her sister, she was heard to exclaim: "Ah! in the chapel again! My God, how I wish I could pray like her."

After her vows, Mary of St. Julienne was sent to Tournai, and there she was appointed sacristan, always her favourite office. It was not long before a hard and persistent cough gave rise to some anxiety about her health, and at the end of 1863 she was sent to Paris, where she found her sister also ill. Father Petit's departure for Nantes and his death shortly afterwards was a great sorrow for Mary of St. Julienne, in whom he had always taken a particularly paternal interest. Mother Mary of Jesus

was the only one who, brushing aside every illusion, faced the possibility of Mary of St. Julienne's illness proving serious. About this time she wrote to a friend:

"I have made the sacrifice of my child . . . if the Master wishes this little flower in all its freshness for Heaven, I will say 'fiat.' For her I shall not regret it, she will find the true life before having been wearied with this one, where, nevertheless, she has suffered much."

Mary of St. Julienne, however, appeared to recover and the Mother Foundress, knowing she could rely upon both her kindness and maturity, named her Assistant at Toulouse. Mother Mary of St. Julienne took fright at this appointment, upon which her mother wrote her the following letter:

"Two of your sisters were very dear to you. They were called: humility and obedience. You lived in peace with them, happy to follow the voice of the one and to hide yourself in the shadow of the other; but to-day, when Jesus again says to you: 'Come, follow me,' you are afraid that perhaps you will no longer be able to hide yourself in the shadow of the Tabernacle. A sort of fear has taken possession of your soul, and you have regretted your favourite place at the Master's feet and wondered if your two dear sisters would remain with you. Do not fear, dear child. In confiding to you the office of Assistant, Jesus wants you to teach all your sisters to love these two precious virtues of humility and obedience. If your charge does not allow you to be so often at His feet, think that in tiring yourself, you are procuring rest for Him; in looking after the others, it is He whom you are taking care of; in practising poverty, it is His goods you are saving; in observing the rule, it is His word that you are obeying; in showing yourself united to your Mother Superior, it is to Jesus that you are submitting. Confi-

dence then, dear child! The Angels will bear you up, so that she who belongs to their Lord and Master will not strike her foot against a stone."

Mary of St. Julienne had not long been Assistant at Toulouse when her Mother's fears were verified on learning that her daughter's illness was diagnosed as tubercular. The Mother Foundress sent her to Strasburg where Mary of St. Victor was Superior. Though distressed at her illness, Mary of St. Victor was delighted to have, once more, the opportunity of looking after her little sister who, thanks to her untiring care, seemed to regain her strength, and was able to take part, with her sister, in the foundation at Liège. Unhappily, shortly after their arrival, cholera broke out in Belgium. The unwholesomeness of the air and the fatigue incidental to a foundation exhausted Mary of St. Julienne, and even she herself began to fear that her illness might prove fatal. "Have you not noticed," she said one day, "that all those who have sisters in the Society are now separated from them by death? I am perfectly sure that my turn has come."

The doctors ordered a trial to be made of the waters at Chaudfontaine near Liège. The result of this treatment was so excellent that hope was again entertained for the patient's recovery. But the illusion was soon dispelled, and the patient herself began to look upon death as very near. At first the thought filled her with fear, but as confidence in God's goodness gained ground, fear disappeared little by little, until it became only a passing temptation, and in its place there grew in her soul a longing desire for Heaven. She wrote in a note book:

"Before rest comes one must work, struggle, conquer, suffer and die. When shall I hear that tender and divine word: Come! Come from earth to Heaven, from time to eternity, from creatures to the Creator. Come to Me, thy Father, thy God, and thy last end. Come! Oh! how I long to hear that call. How quickly I should reply: I come, I run, I fly! O my beloved Saviour, dead upon the Cross for me, with what transport of joy I should throw myself into Thy arms. What then shall I feel when my God, holding me to His Heart, shall say to me: Thou art mine for eternity!"

The last months of her illness were painful for Mary of St. Julienne; God let her taste the bitterness of the humiliation which she had chosen as her portion. While her strength was daily declining, robbing her of all energy and bringing her to a state of prostration in which effort was impossible to her, she retained her good colour which deceived many. At first even the doctors did not take too serious a view of her case, and were inclined to urge their patient to an effort of which she was not capable. Her failure was, she felt, sometimes looked upon as want of courage to overcome herself. Then, while she herself was convinced of the truth, Mary of St. Julienne knew that there were those who loved her dearly, and particularly her sister, who were deceiving themselves as to her condition, and she guessed how the blow would hurt them when it came. Of all this Mary of St. Julienne said nothing, though it wrung her heart, and it was only afterwards that they who had surrounded her with every care, realized how often her sensitive nature must have been wounded to the quick.

Mother Mary of Jesus being at Toulouse, the doc-

tors advised her to bring Mary of St. Julienne there. The change, however, did her no good and her cough became so much worse that she had to take to her bed. About this time Mother Mary of Jesus writes to one of her religious who was also a mother:

"My little St. Julienne is very feeble, though to-day she is perhaps just the least bit better. . . Oh! my dear child why have we brought mothers' hearts into the religious life? When I ask myself that question I get the reply: *That we may suffer alone without being either understood or consoled by any creature*! It is a secret between God and ourselves."

By now the Mother Foundress had not the slightest hope of her child's recovery, and she saw that if they were to return to Paris no time must be lost. She ordered that the rooms once occupied by Mary of St. Julienne and her governess, before her entrance, should be got ready, and on January 15, 1867, brought her daughter back to Paris, her last halting place on earth. Mary of St. Victor then in Paris and still cherishing the illusion of nursing her little sister back to health, was terrified when she saw, in the emaciated figure before her, the progress of the disease.

The next day Father Olivaint, S.J., thought it advisable to administer the Last Sacraments. The calm resignation with which Mother Mary of Jesus received the news proved once more how sincere was the generous offering she had made of herself to God. The Father went in to hear the patient's confession, and had no difficulty in persuading her to receive the Last Sacraments. While the priest

went in search of the holy oils, Mother Mary of Jesus entered the room of her dying child, who asked her: "Do you know what the Father has just told me?" "Yes, dear child, I know," replied the mother, who could not restrain her tears. "Oh! I beg of you, Mother, do not cry, do not be sad," exclaimed the invalid, "I am going to rejoin Papa." "It is only right," replied her mother, slipping round her neck her father's rosary, "that as I have kept you some time with me, Papa should also have his turn." "I am a tiny bit afraid," continued Mary of St. Julienne, "for I am not very sure what my life has been." "But have you not just seen the Father, and has he not forbidden you to be afraid?" "Yes, Mother." "Very well, I also forbid you." "Then I shall think no more about it." A few moments later she said to a religious who was in the room, "Please go and find Mary of St. Victor, in order that she may see that I am not sad." Mary of St. Victor, entering her sister's room began to cry. "Dearest, do not be sad," Mary of St. Julienne said, "I beg of you, for I am sure that I am better and shall recover. I do not mind you crying if it relieves you, but I do not want you to grieve too much. Tell me now that you are not sad. See Mamma, she is crying but she is not sad. Are you Mamma?" At this moment Father Olivaint returned with the Blessed Sacrament and the holy oils. He drew near to the invalid and addressed her practically word for word as follows:

"My child, who is He whom I bring to you? He is a lamb, yes a lamb by His gentleness. What does He come to do? He comes to wipe out, obliterate, the tiniest stain

that remains of the sins which you may have committed. Receive Him, then, with confidence, dear child, and give yourself to Him as He gives Himself to you. . . What more am I going to give you from Him? Extreme Unction, the effect of which will be to strengthen you, and even to give you back your health if such be the will of God. Promise Him that if He still leaves you on earth, you will be a good and fervent Reparatrix. If, on the contrary, He wishes you to be with Him in Heaven, is not that what you also wish; you will pray for your dear mother, for your sister, and for all those who are your sisters in religion? Renew then, dear child, your faith, confidence, contrition, and love, and receive Jesus whom you love and who loves you, whilst awaiting Him to call you to Eternity."

Father Olivaint, after communicating Mary of St. Julienne, began the anointing. The invalid, supported in the arms of her mother, followed every detail of the ceremony with great recollection. Father Olivaint then said a few prayers with her, and added: "When you are in Heaven, dear child, you will be sure to say a little word to Our Blessed Lady for me, won't you?" The priest then withdrew, promising to come back each day. On leaving he said to the Mother Foundress: "You have certainly the most delightful child I have ever met; you have only to thank God for her."

It was during these days so full of anguish for Mother Mary of Jesus that she received the following letter from Father Ginhac, S.J.:

"If the good Master wants to take her, may He finish purifying her and then receive her into the arms of His divine charity, and fill her with everlasting joy. That is what we are asking Him and which He will surely grant. Truly earth is a very sorrowful exile; life passes like a

dream; everything is taken from us here below. You realized this long ago, my child, and so you take no pleasure in this world. But more and more, let us sigh for the life of Heaven. Your maternal heart must be broken; but look at the Master's Heart. He suffered so much for you! He suffers with you. Keep yourself very near this Sacred Heart, do not leave It, and you will be strong in the midst of your sorrow, as your Mother and your Queen was at the foot of the Cross; you will even be consoled, and you will have the power to console others. God alone!

I bless you a thousand times, my very dear child, in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and I pray much for you.

P.G.

A very paternal blessing to the little child, if there is still time."

From their family, too, at this time, both Mary of St. Julienne and her mother received every mark of affection. Since her arrival in Paris, Edmund d'Hooghvorst had hardly left the bedside of his dying sister. Adrian d'Hooghvorst arrived from Florence with his wife, Count Charles d'Oultremont having preceded them. As he had promised, Father Olivaint came each day to see the invalid. On the 22nd, seeing that she was sinking rapidly, he promised to bring her Holy Communion next day, and on the feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin, Mary of St. Julienne received Holy Viaticum. Afterwards she said to her mother: "Think of it, the Father has just told me that it is possible that to-day I may be in Heaven. But perhaps he was only teasing me." The attacks became more frequent, and the dying child struggled for breath. Seeing her frightened her mother said to her: "You know, dear child, the Father has for-

bidden you to be afraid and I also forbid it. Continue to call: Jesus! It is He who will come to fetch you and take you to Himself." The crisis came at 2 p.m. The terrible disease had attacked the intestines causing the patient intolerable suffering. Mother Mary of Jesus, thinking that an upright position would lessen the suffocation, had Mary of St. Julienne lifted into an armchair. They wished to take off her veil, but she whispered: "Do not take it off, it would be against the rule." Father Olivaint, who had been called by telegram, arrived about three o'clock. He went at once to the dying child, and knelt down in front of her, with his crucifix in his hand and said: "Do you recognize me, dear child?" After a sign in the affirmative he continued: "You are suffering a great deal, but have confidence, Jesus is with you." Then he added: "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart, my soul, and my life, is it not so, dear child?" Unable to answer, she kissed the crucifix the Father held out to her. He continued: "We are now going to say a few prayers, if you wish." On another sign from the invalid the Father began the prayers for the dying, to which Mother Mary of Jesus, with a steady voice, replied. Father Olivaint had just invoked St. Julienne of Cornillon, when Mary of St. Julienne died. It was January 23rd, and she was twenty-one years and nine months old.

When Father Studer received the news he wrote from Laval:

"Laval, January 25, 1867.

Yesterday morning I received your letter of the 22nd and in the evening the touching account of the death of

our good little Maguey. What shall I write to you today? It is needless to recommend to you peace and resignation, to try to console you and to dry your tears. Our good Master has not forgotten you in His love, and even though He has struck you so heavily, you have recognized His gentle hand. From her earliest childhood Maguey has often been called by death, but the Divine Master allowed her to turn a deaf ear to its calls until, prepared by long sufferings, and by the virtues of a religious and reparatrix life, she might at once exchange earth for Heaven. We may weep and pray, but no discouragement and our hearts on high! Your course, my dear Mother, is not yet accomplished. You have other children to direct and to lead to the good Master. Keep yourself for your double family, and more especially for your Pia, who is destined to gain souls on earth before obtaining her recompense in a better land. I am very grateful to good Father Olivaint for the spiritual help he gave to Maguey, which will have obtained for her the grace to see sooner, to see at once, her Heavenly Mother. I should have been so happy to assist at the last moments of my little child, but I was not worthy to see a saint die. I have just come from the altar where I said Mass for Maguey, without forgetting those who are left and who mourn for her."

The remains of Mary of St. Julienne were transported to the Castle of Meysse and deposited in the vault of the d'Hooghvorst's. Some time after her death, the Mother Foundress writes in her diary:

"With entire resignation I calmly accepted the death of this child whom I loved with so much tenderness, and whose death has left in my heart a wound that nothing in this life will ever heal. It was thought that this sorrow would in time be assuaged, but for me, her loss is always as cruelly felt. Our Lord wished it so and He is the Master; but He too, has fashioned the hearts of mothers, and He knows what they can bear of suffering."

These lines, so courageous and discreet, portray very inadequately the great grief that overwhelmed the soul of Mother Mary of Jesus. With her little Mary of St. Julienne it was the joy, the flower of her life, that had been taken from her. This lovable child had carried joy, peace and charity everywhere; the Communities in which she had lived were inconsolable, how then could her mother be consoled? One of her religious said to the Mother Foundress one day: "Mother, the death of our little Mary of St. Julienne did not surprise you?" "No, but I did not expect to lose her so soon." "However, as God wished to take her to Heaven, are you not happy to give her to Him?" "Yes, I have given her to Him with all my heart; but if I had been able to keep her a little longer I should have done so, for Our Lord has eternity before Him, and I miss my poor little St. Julienne so much!" In the life of Mary of St. Victor, too, a void had been made that nothing would ever fill.

CHAPTER III

MOTHER MARY OF ST. VICTOR

Foundation in London—Journey to Rome—Illness and Cures.

Having put before our readers the short life of Mary of St. Julienne we must now turn to Mary of St. Victor, whose life was so intimately connected with that of the Mother Foundress, and see her fulfilling her vocation as a Reparatrix.

Olympe d'Hooghvorst was never more beloved by her mother than her sister had been, but her eminent qualities promised more, and, as we have said, it was on her elder daughter that the Mother Foundress relied for the future of the Society. As the following letter shows, the vows of religion had united them still more closely to one another.

"You ask me, my dearest little child, for a 'nice' letter, and you leave me to understand what your heart and soul desire. To speak of 'nice' things, I can only speak of Jesus, for He alone is good, and all that comes from Him, even His Cross, even sufferings, even sacrifice. Wherever He is, there is sweetness and charm; wherever He is not, there is only emptiness and bitterness. I tell myself this, and you too have said it, dear little child, and that is why our hearts, our souls, our minds are so closely united; that is why your life is mine; your thoughts mine, your appreciation of things mine; that is why I am doubly your mother; because the first time Jesus attached your heart to mine; a second time He united your soul to mine and, out of two existences, He made only one. He has, however, separated us, and yet your soul and mine being only one, together we love our Master, however far

apart we may be. I own, dear child, that this thought is very sweet to me, and when I cannot love, when I have not the strength to make a sacrifice, to bear a suffering, I say to myself: My daughter, the child of my heart and of my soul, is there to give to Jesus that which I do not give.

You ask me for a letter, dear little one, and I have sent you one of my dearest and most intimate thoughts, telling myself that you also will place it at the bottom of your heart, among your most consoling thoughts. . ."

Mary of St. Victor was, in September, 1860, named Assistant at Toulouse. Mature and exceedingly kind, she was also supernatural and practical. Her kindness at times was almost a weakness for she would wear herself out without taking into consideration her physical limitations, and her mother had often to show her disapproval on this point. Mary of St. Victor was very mortified, perhaps too much so for her seventeen years. She looked strong and healthy, and those who knew nothing of her constant pain, had no misgivings about her health.

The thoughts of Mother Mary of Jesus had often turned towards England; it seemed to her that a Protestant country would be the very place for a centre of Reparation. The opportunity for this foundation arose in 1860, and immediately Mother Mary of Jesus recalled her daughter from Toulouse and they set out for London, with Mother Mary of St. Joseph. Cardinal Wiseman received them kindly and, not only allowed, but urged the foundation. In the neighbourhood of Regent's Park there was an abandoned house built by the Duke of Brunswick, which had become celebrated on account of the scandalous life he had lived there. At

the death of the Duke, Brunswick House became known as Harley House, and though a beautiful mansion, surrounded by a large garden, no one was anxious to live in it after its former owner. A queen of Oude took up residence there during a stay in England, her suite camping in the garden, while in the drawing-rooms they sacrificed victims to their idols. At her departure, the Indian Queen had left the place in such a disgraceful state that once again the mansion remained uninhabited. Often, on seeing that all too celebrated dwelling, the Cardinal had said to himself: "What is needed here is a centre of reparation, a religious Community." Great was his joy then, when he learnt that the choice of Mother Mary of Jesus had fallen on Harley House and that she had put it under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier. This being settled, the Mother Foundress returned to France, leaving behind her Mother Mary of St. Joseph and Mary of St. Victor, with an English sister, Mary of St. Chantal. On November 16, 1862, Father Gallwey, S.J., said the first Mass on an improvised altar in one of the rooms. During these first days the difficulties were many, and the poverty great. Not being able to assume their religious costume or regular life, each morning they went out to Mass. On their return they bought just what was necessary of bread, butter and tea, while a small supply of cold meat served them for several days. As they possessed no table, at meal times they had to put their plates on their knees! With a great deal of labour the three religious adapted the house to the needs of the Community. To their joy the Mother Foundress reap-

peared amongst them to help them with her advice. She converted into a chapel two large drawing-rooms on the ground floor and, the work and alterations finished, it was opened and blessed on January 6, 1863, when Father Gallwey, S.J., said Mass and gave Benediction. During the day Cardinal Wiseman visited the Community, and a few days later they were honoured with a visit from Mgr. Manning, whose words both cheered and strengthened them. The Mother Foundress was wont to say that every foundation was bought at the price of a sacrifice. Certainly the sacrifice she had had to make for London cost her dear. On the constantly reiterated advice of Father Petit and in spite of her personal repugnance, the Mother General had confided this foundation to Mary of St. Victor, on account of her great tact and knowledge of English. Recalled from Toulouse, where she was greatly loved, it was not without apprehension that the young religious set out for England. She was not at first aware that her mother was naming her Superior, and when warned of this was struck with consternation. It was not only her humility that suffered, but physically she did not feel equal to the task. She had already felt, at Toulouse, pain, which would have preoccupied her more if she had known of what disease it was the premonitory symptom. "To send me so far away," she said one day, "you must have laid aside your mother's heart." "Oh, yes," replied Mother Mary of Jesus, "that is true, very true. If it had not been for the Divine Master I would never, never have done it. The Master wanted a sacrifice from me for London, and I have given Him

the biggest that I could. It is not the first time that I have laid aside my mother's heart, as the Master alone knows."

In London, as in Toulouse, Mary of St. Victor was loved by all around her, and she quickly gained the sympathy of those who visited the Convent. She too, was happy in her new home, and writes in a letter:

"I must tell you that I love England very much, I find the country very beautiful and the trees magnificent. I have got quite used to English customs and I do not feel myself at all a stranger in London."

In spite of her great maturity Mary of St. Victor, on her arrival in England, looked no more than her age, but London robbed her for ever of her youthful look and fresh colour, and there she developed the germ of the disease from which she was never to recover. Unselfish, generous almost to a fault, she undertook more than her physical strength allowed. Upon her shoulders fell all the worry and responsibility inseparable from a new foundation. Besides her nights of watching and prayer, always so dear to Mary of St. Victor, there were nights when extra work had to be done or finished, and the young Superior was always the first to give her services. Mother Mary of Jesus, wishing to see for herself how the new foundation was progressing, returned to England in February. She found Mary of St. Victor seemingly calm and courageous but in reality worn out with worry and fatigue. The presence and advice of her mother revived her for a short while, but her health continued to be impaired.

In July Father Ginhac proposed to the Mother Foundress that she should draw up an abridged plan of the Institute and present it at Rome. Mother Mary of Jesus imparts this news to her daughter in the following letter:

"July 21, 1863.

It is your feast day, dear and well beloved child, when everyone has offered their Communion for you and when, needless to say, I have given you everything, that I come to tell you about a visit I have had from Father Ginhac, which will amuse you and give you great pleasure. He came on Saturday, saying: 'Dear child, I have five minutes, let us use them well.' 'Father, I do not ask for anything better.' 'This is what I think you ought to do: draw up a very short, and at the same time a very complete plan of the Society. Write to all the Bishops of the places where you have houses, for letters of approbation for the Holy Father, and before the end of the year you must go to Rome in order to obtain the first laudatory approbation. You will take one or other with you, but all that *must* be done, and will be done; I have only one minute left, come to confession.'

You can imagine how astounded I was, though, all the same, very pleased. The journey to Rome is, then, decided, the Father wanted it to be in September, I said November, and he replied: 'Yes.' You know that it has always been understood that you should accompany me. You can show the Holy Father the little rosary he blessed for you, and which you have worn since the age of four."

Though suffering, Mary of St. Victor struggled on, without complaining, until August, when the Mother Foundress relieved her of her burden by recalling her to Paris. It was with sorrow and regret that Mary of St. Victor left Harley House; during these months London had become very dear to her, she had gained the hearts, not only of her Com-

munity, but also of outsiders, and until the end of her life she never lost touch with the friends she had made. There she had toiled and devoted herself, without counting the cost, and now, just when she was beginning to see the fruits of that devotedness, she had to turn her back on it all. She was often heard to say: "Dear Harley House, I suffered much there, but I loved it all the more on that account."

In her letter to her daughter recalling her from London, the Mother Foundress at the same time named her Superior of the Paris House. In answer Mary of St. Victor wrote:

"Harley House, August 1, 1863.

I have just received your kind letter and I want to answer it at once. . . Although I never like to complain or to speak to you of what makes me suffer, I have made up my mind to do so to-day, after having prayed very much to St. Ignatius yesterday. So, Mother, I come to *beg* of you not to think of me for the charge of Superior at Paris. I assure you that I have neither the strength nor the courage for it, and still less the capacity. . . Now that my mission in London is finished, I beg of you, Mother, do not impose on me this new Superiority which I so much dread, for the House of Paris is larger and more important than that of London. . . Next March it will be six years since I entered the Society; so if I make my last vows at the end of seven years, there is not much longer to wait. Mother, will you not consent to leave me without a charge for one year, so that I may prepare myself for them? I could complete my studies and I should be able to render more service to the Society in the future if I were better instructed, above all in spiritual things. I have often thought of this and the older I get the more difficult it will be. . . Perhaps, Mother, you will not believe me, but I feel that my head is being worn out with so much thinking and preoccupation, and that it needs a

rest. And yet, I should not like you to take my physical state into consideration. That is what I wanted to tell you, Mother, but you know that I will accept willingly and with perfect submission whatever you think well to decide, and will do my best to conform to it with the grace of Our Lord. . ."

To this letter, Mother Mary of Jesus sent her daughter the following reply:

"I hope that you are well convinced that the great desire of my heart is to help you, to save you from suffering, and that when I cannot do this as quickly as I would, it is only impossibility that hinders me. I will not say what Pope Clement XIII. said to St. Alphonsus Liguori. When this good Saint received the news that he was named Bishop of St. Agatha, he was so troubled that, in spite of his resignation, he remained several days in convulsions. All those around him, distressed and frightened at seeing him, who was so necessary to the Congregation he had just founded, dying of sorrow, wrote to the Holy Father asking him to withdraw his order, and Clement XIII. replied, what very certainly I should never reply: 'If he dies, tell him that I bless him; if he lives he will be Bishop of St. Agatha.' I have always been astonished at this reply, and said to myself: The Holy Father must have known that St. Alphonsus would live. In the same way, dear child, it is because I know that the dear Master will help you very specially, in every way, that I do not fear to put you in Paris. So be at peace, perfectly at peace, preoccupied about nothing. The dear Master knows everything, will arrange everything, and will bear everything with you. And you, you must not fear, you must not doubt. . ."

Scarcely had Mary of St. Victor taken up her charge of Superior at Paris, when the question again arose of the proposed journey to Rome, on which it

had always been understood Mary of St. Victor would accompany her mother.

It was on December 8, 1863, that the Mother Foundress with her daughter and Mother Mary of St. John set out for Italy. At Florence they venerated the incorrupt body of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi; at Siena the little house of St. Catherine. December 18th they were knocking at the door of the convent of the Poor Clares at Viterbo, and there had the privilege of entering the cloister and visiting the little house of St. Rose. At all these sanctuaries Mother Mary of Jesus prayed for the approval of the Society and that she might love God as the saints had loved Him.

From Viterbo they went on to Rome, where they arrived on the evening of the 19th. There they rented a tiny flat where the first thing that Mary of St. Victor did was to arrange an altar of the Blessed Virgin and light a lamp at the feet of her dear Madonna.

The Mother Foundress, having transmitted to the Holy Father the plan of the Institute, profited by the delay necessitated by the slowness of the Congregations to show her two companions around Rome which she knew so well. On Christmas Day they attended Mass celebrated by the Pope in St. Peter's.

Nevertheless, the Mother Foundress missed the solitude of the Convent.

"We are quite all right here," she writes, "but it is not my dear cloistered life, and I cannot get accustomed to living outside the Convent. We live a very retired life, hardly seeing anyone but a few Monsignori. . ."

CONVENT OF MARY REPARATRIX. ENTEBBE. UGANDA.

BAGANDA CHILDREN ON THE DAY OF THEIR SOLEMN COMMUNION IN PREPARATION FOR WHICH THEY PASS SIX MONTHS IN THE CONVENT.

Pius IX. received the three religious on January 24th, Mgr. de Mérode introducing them. Pius IX. was standing, and after giving them his hand to kiss, spoke with the greatest kindness to Mother Mary of Jesus of Count d'Oultremont. The Holy Father also asked what had become of little Marguerite who had been her grandfather's companion on his last journey to Rome, and was delighted to hear that she too had become a nun. Then the Mother Foundress presented to him her eldest daughter whom, some twenty years earlier, Pius IX. had recommended so strongly to become a saint. The Pope then enquired about the Society, of its aim, rules and of the way in which they understood reparation. He then congratulated Mother Mary of Jesus on having followed in the steps of St. Francis Xavier in accepting work on the Missions. The religious left the Vatican deeply touched and delighted. It was on February 8th that Mother Mary of Jesus was accorded the audience, so long desired, with the Holy Father, when she presented to him the plan of the Society. The Pope read the first Article, promised to examine the rest and to be for the Society "strength and support."

At the beginning of March, Mother Mary of Jesus received a telegram which read: "Father Petit is very ill, pray for him." The Mother Foundress had had a presentiment of this news, and on receiving the telegram felt sure that the Father was dying; on the 14th a second telegram announced his death. Worn out with work and austerities, Father Petit, S.J., succumbed to an attack of pneumonia after only a few days' illness, having received the

Last Sacraments fully conscious. He was only forty-four years of age. The doctor had asked as a favour to watch by him during his last night on earth and afterwards wrote:

"A night of prayer which I shall remember as long as I live, a night for which I shall always be grateful to God who so ordered it that I should see a saint grappling with illness and suffering. . ."

At a difficult moment when her work was not yet firmly established, and when to support it meant almost to compromise oneself, Father Petit had not hesitated to uphold Madame d'Hooghvorst's undertaking. On the occasion of his death, Father Studer wrote to the Mother Foundress:

"You have lost a true father and I the best and tenderest of friends . . . he will obtain for us from Jesus, Mary, and St. Ignatius, whom he loved so much, light and strength. He will plead before the throne of God the cause of Mary Reparatrix, and the little Society will flourish on this earth for the greater glory of God and the reparation of the world."

Before leaving Rome, Mother Mary of Jesus and her companions went on a pilgrimage to Subiaco. On her return she writes to one of her daughters:

"Subiaco is indeed the most delightful solitude that can be imagined . . . everything speaks of the greatness of God. There, nothing can be heard, nothing but the most profound silence, occasionally interrupted by the song of the nightingales who sing better here than anywhere else, or by the murmur of a torrent which falls to 200 feet below the monastery. . .

Here the monks, fourteen in number, live in peace, inaccessible to the noise of the world; they can only be reached after an hour and a half's walk. Lower down

is another monastery, St. Scholastica's, which shelters seventy monks; its position is also superb and the same silence reigns. It was with great regret that I left these enchanting spots, for, every day, I grow more weary of the world and of its noise, and I say over and over again to my Beloved Master: When will my exile end? Oh! it is there that one could give utterance to the transports of Divine Love with which the heart is full, there one could let one's soul cry out, when its Home-sickness becomes too strong, and its suffering more than one can bear.

Oh! it would have been such happiness had I been able to remain alone for a while in that dear church of the mountain, at the foot of that dear Tabernacle placed in the naked rock! . . . But all that had to remain hidden at the bottom of my heart. The Master alone understood; it would have been a joy too heavenly to have been able to last on earth.

These, dear child, are the wanderings of my soul, such as you have heard before. She whom you call your Mother, and who has indeed a mother's heart for you, though she does not deserve the name, is sometimes a little mad; yes, mad for Heaven, where He whom she loves dwells. Ah! when will my thirst be quenched. . ."

On April 9th Mother Mary of Jesus learnt that the authorization had been given, and the news was officially confirmed some days later. The Pope approved the name Society of Mary Reparatrix, he praised its end, its work, the zeal of the Foundress in propagating her Order. He ordered that the Foundress during her life should retain the government of the Society, with the title of Superior General. The Apostolic Brief was to be despatched on June 27, 1864. The Mother General immediately imparted this news to all the houses of the Society. From Rome, Mother Mary of Jesus went to Loreto

to thank the Blessed Virgin, and then returned to Toulouse.

The Pontifical approbation marked the end of a period in the life of the Society, that of the exclusive action of the Mother Foundress. Four Assistants were henceforth to help the Superior General by their counsel; Mother Mary of St. Victor became Assistant for Belgium and England.

During this long stay in Italy, the Mother Foundress had decided to establish the Mother House of the Society in Rome. This resolution was approved by all those on whose judgment she relied, its advantages being evident; but it was not so easy to put into practice on account of the great difficulty of finding suitable quarters. No foundation caused the Mother Foundress more personal solicitude, or greater fatigue than that of Rome. At length, however, she succeeded in her search for a house, and in adapting it to the needs of a Community, devoting herself with her usual energy, directing the workmen, working like a simple sister, though nearly always suffering physically. This house, in the Via Borgo, was opened on June 21st and placed under the patronage of St. Peter.

For a long time Mother Mary of Jesus had wished to have a house in Liège, a town naturally dear to her, and in January, 1865, Monseigneur de Montpellier wrote to her:

"I need not tell you, my dear child, how you will be received at Liège. You know my old and unalterable attachment to you and your children, and how much I suffered at your departure. As much as I then opposed, with frankness and firmness, the execution of a project

that I looked upon for a long time as rash, and little in conformity with the ordinary ways of Providence, so, to-day, when God seems to have accepted your sacrifice and blessed your work, to-day when the Vicar of Jesus Christ has given a first approbation to your Rules, you can count, my dear child, on being received at Liège with all the affection of a father, and that your children will find in their Bishop all the kindness and all the support that they need."

It was only on February 24, 1866, that the Mother General was able to carry out her plan, and open on Mount St. Martin a house under the patronage of St. Julienne of Cornillon, putting at its head as Superior Mother Mary of St. Victor. It was during her Superiority at Liège that the illness from which she had been suffering for some time was definitely declared to be a disease of the spinal cord. At the same time, her younger sister was seriously ill with tuberculosis, without any hope of recovery. As soon as the Mother General heard of the gravity of Mary of St. Victor's state, she sent orders for her to go to Paris, there to follow a treatment. She arrived just in time to receive her dying sister, whom Mother Mary of Jesus was bringing from Toulouse, and at whose death shortly after she was present. During those days of anguish Mary of St. Victor wrote to one of her sisters in religion:

"Paris, January, 1867.

. . . Yes, I am very ill and suffering greatly, but all that is nothing; my heart is breaking for our little St. Julienne and my poor mother; I cannot look at her for her dear eyes are always full of tears, and they make mine flow.

My two brothers are admirable, so full of tenderness and devotedness. It is impossible to tell you how great

is their grief; we four love one another so dearly! I tell you all this because I know that you are not indifferent to anything that concerns me.

When you receive these lines Julienne may be in Heaven, she can no longer speak and is suffocating. Good-bye and pray for me."

Mary of St. Victor never recovered from the shock of her sister's death. A letter written to another religious on the first anniversary reveals how greatly and how tenderly she loved her.

"January 23, 1868.

A year ago, at this very hour, I was watching with sorrowful emotion and tender love, the Flower which Jesus was going to take from me! The beautiful and graceful head of the Lily of Cornillon was bending more and more on its stem, and would in a few seconds be plucked from the earth, and carried to Heaven by the Angel whom Jesus had charged to bring it to Him with all the grace of its innocent purity, and the freshness of its twenty years.

O you who love her too, I have felt the need of passing with you this hour of sorrowful memory. . . The flower which I loved so much and which was the sweetest consolation of my life has been taken from me. . . Why are you so far away? We could have talked together of Heaven. . ."

Mother Mary of St. Victor's own agony, which was to last seven years, now began. After Mary of St. Julienne's death she had to be removed to Liège as quickly as possible. Her mother was to take her, and the evening before their departure she wrote:

"You will easily understand all it means to me to see this child so ill just when the other one has been taken from me. All that the Master does is good, He knows

what is necessary for us. As for me, I hardly know what I do, I am like a machine. Though not without difficulty I was able to keep on my feet, for I must not let my invalid see what is passing in my heart and soul. I am ill from every point of view. They want me to take a month's complete rest in order that I may not entirely break down. It is difficult enough with business affairs, my correspondence and this dear invalid. Where will it all lead to? I do not know. . . All that is in the Master's keeping."

It was arranged that they should break their journey at the Castle of Presle where the Mother General had business matters to settle with her brother and her sons. But at Presle Mary of St. Victor's state suddenly became so much worse that even the doctors gave up hope, while the patient herself was suffering agonies. Father Olivaint, S.J., was the only one who did not lose courage. If all human means had been tried and failed, then they must trust God's infinite goodness and mercy and hope for a miracle. As we have remarked several times, Mary of St. Victor had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin; her dear Madonna was everything to her. Father Olivaint now suggested a novena to Our Lady of la Salette for the cure of Mary of St. Victor. It was finally decided that two consecutive novenas should be made, the second to finish on March 25th, and in which all the houses of the Society and several other religious Communities should take part. Mother Mary of Jesus, who never doubted, but who, in her humility, felt the need of support, begged from the Pope a Mass and a blessed medal. She assured the Holy Father that she and her daughter had faith enough to believe

that the cure would be granted on the 25th if the Pope ordered it. To which the Holy Father, in giving the medal, replied: "Do they take me for St. Peter?" "No, but for his successor." "Ah, well! since they have faith, if it is God's will tell the invalid on my behalf that she will be cured on the last day of the novena."

The faith of mother and daughter was to have its reward. For a full account of that happy cure we cannot do better than turn to the letter written by the Bishop of Liège to the Bishop of Grenoble:

"September 1, 1867.

My Lord,

Your Lordship has expressed a desire to know the circumstances relating to the cure of a religious of my diocese, one which our grateful love attributes to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, invoked under the title of Our Lady of la Salette. I understand this request, my Lord, and most willingly accede to your desire, above all as it is a real satisfaction to me to give glory to our common Mother and Queen, and it is honourable, the Scripture tells us, to reveal and to praise the works of God.

Mother Mary of St. Victor, religious of Mary Reparatrix, whose illness and cure we are about to relate, is now in the 24th year of her age. She has always had a good, even strong, constitution, in spite of a rather rapid growth. Her mind is clear, lucid, and upright, carefully cultivated, her character firm and gentle, with great evenness of soul and a calm and solid piety.

At the age of 18, being at Toulouse, in the House of her Order, she experienced the first attack of her illness, or rather the disease declared itself by effects, at first relatively slight, that is to say, by a great weakness in the legs, pains in the back and a general and continual lassitude. A distinguished doctor of that town was consulted and

did not hide from her family the gravity of her state, but, considering her good constitution, he persuaded himself that her symptoms were rather the result of a too rapid growth than of an organic disease.

This state had not changed when, a year later, she went to England to found a House of her Order. She had spent a year in London when, during the second year, pains in the arms and right side were added to her other symptoms. She was recalled to Paris, where the doctor who attended her recognized the nature of the disease without being able to combat it efficaciously, or even hinder its progress. Frequent headaches made her state still more painful, and the difficulty of using her right arm became greater and greater.

In January, 1866, she went with the Superior General to Liège to establish a House there. For a short time, her native air, especially when the warm weather and Mary's month came round, appeared to have a salutary effect on her health, but this did not last, for in July the disease was again making progress. Her legs continued to grow weaker, her spine became intensely sensitive, so that anything coming the least little bit into contact with it caused the patient acute and insupportable suffering. Little by little she lost her sleep until her nights became nothing but long attacks of fever. During the day she experienced at times a complete prostration accompanied by spasms which lasted an hour or more.

Soon, all manual occupation and almost every movement became excessively painful, the energy of her will was able to dissimulate her suffering, but it could do nothing against the powerlessness of the organ itself. The spinal cord became more and more paralysed, so that at times it could not support the weight of her head, which bent under its weight, as would have done a weak reed surmounted by a mass of lead. From November 21st, Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, she hardly ever left her room. The Superior General, who was at Paris at the bedside of her youngest daughter, Mother

Mary of St. Julienne, who was dying, had several times asked her nuns in Liège to send Mother Mary of St. Victor to Paris if the doctor thought she could bear the journey. This could not be done until January 2nd. On her arrival in Paris, the doctor recognized the progress of the disease, and judged it urgent to employ the most energetic remedies, but they could not check it. The spinal cord became so weak that she could no longer hold her head up, it fell on her chest, unless the patient held it between her hands, her elbows resting on her knees. The doctors, fearing disastrous results from this position, tried in vain every means of preventing the patient from taking it, and only succeeded by putting her into an iron corset. The exterior remedies prescribed by the Paris doctors requiring a certain lapse of time to produce their effects, the Superior General was advised to take her daughter to the country, where the air would be purer and more vivifying. She took her to the Castle of Presle, in Belgium, the home of her brother, Count Charles d'Oultremont. They arrived there on February 4th. They were both under an illusion with regard to the probable course of the malady and both counted on a speedy improvement and hoped soon to see once more their dear companions of Liège and their solitude.

But the patient grew worse and worse, the pains in the back became more acute, reaching the neck and finally the head, while the right arm became more and more paralysed, she lost her appetite, and the little food she took in order to avoid total exhaustion instead of doing her good made her suffer intensely. They called in a celebrated professor from the University of Louvain, who approved the treatment prescribed in Paris and extended its application. The cauteries applied to the nape of the neck freed the right arm a little, but gave no relief to the head, indeed it got worse and worse, so much so that the iron corset, which was kept on even in bed, no longer kept the head up, it hung down in every direction. To keep it in its natural position, the patient had to wear a

cardboard collar. Strong doses of opiates to calm the pain had no effect, so that the poor child had not a moment's rest; her sufferings were continual. Seeing the progress of the disease and that it would not yield to the most energetic treatment, the doctor let it be understood that he despaired of getting it under control, and warned those who were with the patient of the imminence of violent convulsions caused by the acute sufferings of the head and spinal cord, and, in fact, she had long and violent nervous attacks accompanied by suffocation.

At this moment, a first Novena of prayers to Our Lady of la Salette was begun. The patient united her intention to it, after having offered to God the sacrifice of her life, with a generous resignation which was more the result of her great piety than of her youth, though at her age one is more detached from this present life.

From the last day of the Novena, the nervous attacks and the suffocation disappeared, which was at least a relief to the patient. But her confidence in the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin was rudely tried; after eight days of slight relief, every shadow of hope disappeared and the sufferings returned with renewed violence and all the characteristics of tetanus. The attacks were frightful. They lasted a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes and she became unconscious, add to this the spasms which returned every day and lasted for more than an hour, during which she gave no sign of life. Her digestion hardly functioned and could no longer support any remedies. All the resources of medicine had been employed and had failed; humanly speaking, there was no more hope. Yet the patient and her pious mother did not lose confidence, on the contrary, they were convinced that the work of God would be manifested, when the science of men had confessed its powerlessness, and that the cure would take place on March 25th, the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

A Novena was begun for this intention in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of la Salette, all the Houses of the

Society joined in it, and several religious Communities, as also a large number of pious people in France and Belgium. From March 17th, day of the opening of the Novena, the patient stopped taking any remedies, not because of the Novena but because of the impossibility of digesting anything. However, from the first day of the Novena the patient grew worse, her weakness was extreme, she could not be moved, even with the greatest precautions, without causing her frightful suffering, which threw her into spasms out of which she could only be drawn with infinite trouble. The day before the last of the Novena was appalling; the acute sufferings were continuous and so intense that they brought on another attack of tetanus. The patient, almost beside herself with pain, was biting her fingers, and it was only with the greatest difficulty, by causing her still more suffering, that they managed to force open her teeth and draw out her bleeding fingers.

After the attack she was so exhausted, so prostrate, that she felt she was dying. One could not hear what she said unless one put one's ear close to her mouth. As it seemed as if God were manifesting His intention of calling her to Himself, she sent in the evening to ask her mother, who was herself in bed in the same room, if she should still hope to be cured the next day. On her affirmative reply, Mother Mary of St. Victor added: 'I do not doubt either, but I needed this assurance for I feel very bad.'

Soon after, she confessed to the parish priest. The night was as painful as the day had been, no sleep, uninterrupted pain, continual fever, indescribable suffering. When morning came, feeling herself growing weaker and weaker, feeling also that an attack of tetanus was imminent, she sent to ask the parish priest to come quickly to give her Holy Communion, she also asked her mother not to fail to tell her to get up. A little before 7 Monsieur le Curé came to give her the Blessed Eucharist; they both prayed with all the fervour and all the confidence of

which they were capable, and they felt more and more certain that God, in His goodness, was going to answer their prayers. The mother felt more and more urged to order her daughter to arise, she wanted to but did not dare, and reproached herself for her hesitation without being able to overcome it. In her perplexity she appealed to the Blessed Virgin and said to her with simplicity: 'O, Mother, I trust in thy goodness, I will call her when thou tellest me to do so.' Hardly had she said these words when she seemed to see, near her daughter's bed, the Blessed Virgin as she is represented at la Salette, brilliant with light, and to hear these words: 'Call her, I will raise her up.' Without hesitation the mother cried aloud to her daughter 'Pia' (her pet name), and the latter, quicker than lightning, was in her mother's arms, having recovered the use of all her limbs and feeling no pain. Mother and daughter were in tears, blessing God, thanking Mary, offering themselves to them more entirely than ever. At last the daughter tore herself from her mother's arms and went and knelt before the little altar of Our Lady of la Salette in her room, and remained for some time there in prayer. Then dressing quickly and without help, she went to her uncle's room. He, astonished at the apparition, could not believe his eyes; he thought that it could not be she. Soon all the inmates of the Castle gathered round, expressing their admiration and their joy. Mass was about to begin at the parish, and Monsieur le Curé announced the event to the whole parish, and after Mass a Te Deum was sung in thanksgiving. Mother Mary of St. Victor went to the church adjoining the Castle, and took her place before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin, where she remained kneeling during the whole of the Te Deum. The same day she resumed all her usual habits, ate with a good appetite, slept peacefully, in a word—she was radically cured.

✠ Théodore, Bishop of Liège."

A burst of joy from all sides greeted the news of the cure of Mary of St. Victor. Father Studer writes

from Laval: "Our Lord has again heard your prayers and those of your children. Your dearly loved Pia has come back to life and to health; tell her that more than ever she belongs entirely to Jesus and Mary; that without being imprudent she must consecrate all she has of strength and ability to God who has loved her so much. . ." But this joy was to be of short duration. God wished to try again Mary of St. Victor's strength of soul. On March 30th she imprudently hastened back to join her Community at Liège. She was shockingly thin, but this was the only sign that remained of her illness; she had recovered her fresh complexion and her walk was firm and steady. After a short stay at Liège, Mary of St. Victor returned to Presle, where she found her mother still very ill; but on this journey she had really not taken sufficient precautions. A chill was the cause of a bad attack of peritonitis and once more, in another way, her life was in danger. This relapse, which could so easily have been avoided, was an unexpected and overwhelming blow for the Mother General.

On Easter Sunday Father Olivaint, S.J., arrived at Presle where he passed the night. Though so short, his visit had inspired both mother and daughter with new hope and courage. When leaving he said to Mary of St. Victor: "You must get better, I want you to get better." Once more Our Blessed Lady was appealed to, and new novenas were begun. In a letter dated May 1st Father Olivaint writes to Mother Mary of Jesus:

"My child, how impatiently I waited for a letter yesterday! With what impatience I waited for to-day's post!

Nothing. The Blessed Virgin has not yet answered our prayers. Then we must make a great novena. Confidence, confidence! Who knows whether Our Blessed Lady, in delaying to grant this grace we so much desire, is not giving you the opportunity of expiating a sort of mistrust and discouragement to which you perhaps gave way, even after the miraculous cure? Who knows if by this trial, the Blessed Virgin does not want to strengthen your humility and religious spirit, which, so easily, would be compromised if miracles were always granted, as it were, at your command? Dear child, humility, confidence, and another novena. I fear lest a little mistrust should take hold of you, of you and the dear child. Do not let it be so, I beg of you. Bless her for me and keep up her courage and her faith, and soon we shall sing a second 'Magnificat.' It is none the less true that I share your sorrow, but once again, confidence. I send you my blessing for you and those who are with you. Jesus! Mary! Confidence!"

Such a faith moves mountains; Mary of St. Victor was cured a second time, though less completely than on March 25th, and besides, God did not wish to leave her on earth. For six years, while allowing her to devote herself in His service, God was going to keep her in a sort of continual agony, bringing her back several times, at the prayer of her mother and the word of Father Olivaint, from death to life. With reason will Mother Mary of Jesus say: "She only exists by a miracle, and it is this miracle which prevents her from dying." Father Olivaint, speaking of Mary of St. Victor to her mother, said: "Your daughter has become so supernatural, so detached from the things of earth, that nothing but God's will has any weight with her; whatever sacri-

fice is imposed on her we can be quite confident that it will be fully accepted."

The words of St. Liguori: "O Holy Will of God, what happiness to love you," were as food to her soul, and she loved to have them beside her on her desk where her eyes fell often on them. This favourite maxim of Mary of St. Victor can still be read on the altar placed on the spot where she died, the room now being the oratory of the Blessed Virgin in the Convent.

After this second shock, Mother Mary of Jesus took longer to recover than her daughter. Moral and physical suffering had struck at the very root of her being. "They say that I am no longer myself," she writes to one of her daughters, "and I feel it is true. Perhaps before I see you I shall be myself again."

After her second cure Mother Mary of St. Victor joined the Community at Tournai, and in the November of the following year she accompanied her mother to Italy. The house in Rome being altogether inappropriate to the needs of a religious Community, another was found in the Via Sant' Isidoro. Before again setting out with her daughter for Paris, the Mother General left full instructions, down to the most minute detail, for the finishing of the necessary work and repairs. This House was only opened a year later.

They returned to Paris in March, Mary of St. Victor immediately rejoining her Community at Liège. In July, however, both mother and daughter were ordered by the doctors to Plombières, for the waters. Father Ginhac urged them

both to follow this advice. At Plombières Mary of St. Victor became worse and, in loneliness, face to face with her suffering child, the Mother General again went through the anguish she experienced at Presle. "Those six weeks at Plombières," she acknowledged, "will ever remain in my memory, as one of the most sorrowful periods of my life."

The waters brought no amelioration whatever to Mary of St. Victor. She had another attack of peritonitis, and the remedies applied caused her more suffering than the disease itself. Her state aroused the pity of all who saw her. In a letter to Father Olivaint the Mother General writes:

"What can I say to you about my dear Mary of St. Victor? She is desperately weak and can no longer walk a single step. She has tried the baths, but the exertion proved too much for her, she can take no food and is living on nothing, she does not sleep and each day has less strength. I dare not think of the future; I have so much to do and Our Lord keeps me tied here wondering for how long it will be. Then this winter I must go to Rome! Without a miracle that will be impossible."

It was at this time that the Mother Foundress received the following letter from the Bishop of Liège which was a great consolation to her:

"I am more and more convinced of the goodness, utility and solidity of your work: your success might have made us fear; the crosses which God causes to spring up under your feet, or rather, which He plants in the heart of the Foundress of the Work, reassure us! Yes, dear Emilie, Marguerite in Heaven, Olympe on a bed of suffering, and you suffering by her side, that is the sap which gives life to the tree which you have planted, and whose excellent fruits we so much appreciate.

Most heartily do we unite our poor prayers to those of all your holy daughters; we pray for your dear child whom God is purifying, and making daily more perfect, and we ask Him to preserve her for His glory and the good of your Work. We pray above all for you, dear Emilie, whom we love with a heart which has always been so intimately united to the hearts which have most loved you on earth. We love you with the heart of a Bishop who sees, before all else, the sanctification and perfection of a soul, the glory of God and the heavenly recompense. We ask God to finish His work and to give you a courage proportioned to the trials which He has in store for you.

I went yesterday to bless your little family at Mount St. Martin which is always so peaceful and so edifying. Prayer is easy there and there you are loved!

I hope that you will be able to realize your projects and that I shall see you in Liège at the beginning of September. I bless you very affectionately with my good little child St. Victor.

Yours devotedly in Our Lord,

✠ Théodore, Bishop of Liège."

Finding the treatment was proving absolutely useless, the Mother Foundress decided to take her daughter back to Paris. Not wishing to make the journey alone, she asked her son Edmund to come and fetch them. On August 28th Mary of St. Victor, quite helpless, was put into the train, and on their arrival in Paris they had to give her chloroform in order to be able to transport her from the station to the house. The next day Father Olivaint called to see the invalid. She was in bed unable to make a movement, terribly thin and worn out with suffering and want of sleep and food. The Father told her that she had to begin a novena to the Blessed

MOTHER MARY OF ST. VICTOR, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HER CURE.
TAKEN IN THE ORATORY OF THE PARIS CONVENT.

Virgin for September 8th, that that day he would come to say Mass and that she *must* be present at it. The novena was begun and her sufferings only increased; humanly speaking there was no hope of her living. During the evening of the 7th she had one of the most terrible attacks of pain imaginable, for three-quarters of an hour her screams were heart-rending, the night, too, was frightful. Obedient, however, to the order of Father Olivaint, she got up at six o'clock perfectly well, asked to go down to confession before the Mass at which she communicated, afterwards taking her breakfast with the appetite of her childhood.

Mary of St. Victor, cured for the third time, returned once more to Liège. There she took up her duties as Superior, and the Mother Foundress writes of her to Father Olivaint:

"Mary of St. Victor continues to keep well though weak and very thin. It is astonishing that she is able to go about as she does. She eats well and several times a day, even asking for food because she feels the need of it."

In November, 1869, Mary of St. Victor again accompanied her mother to Rome, but hardly had they arrived when once more she fell so seriously ill that it was thought advisable to administer the Last Sacraments. She rallied, however, and the doctors insisting that she needed a more northerly climate, the Mother General left Rome with her daughter in April. The journey was long and difficult; the invalid suffered continually, fainting at the slightest shock; several times they feared to lose her, and when, on May 7th, at nine in the evening, she arrived in Paris, Mary of St. Victor gave no longer any

sign of life, and only came back to consciousness during the night.

Father Olivaint had gone to the station to meet the invalid but she had not recognized him. During the week he visited her several times, and ended by declaring that he again wanted to see her on her feet. On June 28th, the Father celebrated Mass in the Convent chapel; Mary of St. Victor, at the word of obedience, got up and went to it. The next day Mother Mary of Jesus sent to Father Olivaint the last feast day greetings she would be able to offer him.

"My very dear Father,

You are very busy and overwhelmed with letters, mine does not require an answer, it only comes to assure you that your child did not forget you this morning and asked Jesus to pay all her debts of gratitude to you. What do I not owe you, Father? You understand without my adding more, and I can say, in all truth, that everything on this occasion has come to me by you. The Master made you the Guardian Angel of my daughter, and your heart has made you her Father. Thank you for all your goodness and kindness. St. Peter will be my advocate with Jesus, to tell Him that you have in me an insolvent child, and the Master will pay, for the sake of him who asks, and also for the sake of him for whom he asks.

For myself, I have nothing, nothing to offer you, you know that I am destitute of everything except of gratitude, and that will only die with me. Bless your child and receive her respectful affection and her devotedness everywhere and always."

CHAPTER IV

MOTHER MARY OF ST. VICTOR

Death of Father Olivaint— Last Illness and Death of Mother Mary of St. Victor.

In 1870 Mary of St. Victor still Superior at Liège, and at the same time Provincial of Belgium, followed with deep interest the events of the war in France. Forgetting herself, in order to think of the greater sufferings of others, she fulfilled admirably her duties as Superior. Her strength was failing but her unalterable calm and patience deceived those around her, yet in spite of failing strength, her energy did not desert her. In January, 1871, she learnt that some of the Mother General's counsellors, too nervous about the state of affairs in Strasburg, were insisting on closing the House of the Society there, which had been momentarily abandoned after the siege. Alarmed at this news, Mary of St. Victor intervened and offered to go herself to reopen this House which was particularly dear to her. She won her cause without difficulty, and on May 15, 1871, set out to restore Community life in the House at Strasburg. There an immense sacrifice was going to be demanded of her; soon after arriving she learnt of the death of Father Olivaint. The Mother General who had been called to Rome in May, had a presentiment of this and knew the deep impression it would make on her daughter, and wished to be near her when the news reached Alsace.

"I have returned from Florence in forty-four hours," she writes, "stopping neither day nor night, urged by I know not what. Having arrived at six o'clock on Tuesday evening, we received the terrible news on Wednesday morning. Poor dear Pia is dreadfully distressed, but very, very reasonable. I feel so sorry for her, and am crushed at the thought of seeing her ill again without the dear and holy Father to bring her back to life. After all, he will be in Heaven, this holy martyr, more powerful for her, for you, and for me than when on earth; but his absence leaves so great a void."

Resigned, but doubly crushed by this blow and the fatigue endured at Strasburg, Mother Mary of St. Victor returned to Belgium, while her mother went on to Paris. On June 29th, the Mother General writes to her daughter:

"I arrived here yesterday evening and went to see the Fathers. The Father Superior gave me the little legacy which the Father Provincial, who is absent, had left for me. It is a portrait of Saints Peter and Paul, in a worn case, and before which Father Olivaint always used to pray. They are going to return the bodies of the martyred Fathers, which will be buried in the chapel. Never again to see dear Father Olivaint in this house, oh! how it hurts. I went to confession in his own confessional, it was all very sad and you will understand better than anyone how much I have felt it. I also went to the famous rue Haxo; it is truly the road to Calvary; they must have walked two hours, tired and close pressed as they were. I took a piece of plaster from the wall, all covered with blood, and saw the horrible hole into which they were thrown. . .

There, my dearest child, is all that I can tell you of this dear Father. All those whom I have seen have said to me 'Oh! it is sad, very sad for Pia, but then tell her it is such a glory for him and that from Heaven he will protect her all the more.' "

To another, the Mother General wrote:

"One could say many beautiful things of Father Olivaint. I remember one day while he was talking to me of the love of Our Lord, tears filled his eyes and he said: 'O, dear child, let us love Our Lord with all the love of which we are capable; let us give Him everything, keeping nothing back and never counting the cost, for in Heaven, though it is very beautiful, we will no longer be able to give Jesus our blood and our tears. Oh! could I only give Him every drop of my blood and die a martyr for love of Him! . . .' "

For some time, there had been question of a foundation in Brussels, which Mother Mary of Jesus was longing to undertake. A house having been procured in the rue de la Poste, the Mother Foundress went herself in the month of May to direct and hasten on the preparations. Mary of St. Victor came from Liège and had asked that the opening should take place on September 14th, Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The date was prophetic, for, on the cross, three months later, the young Assistant of Belgium died.

When she arrived in Brussels, with her mother, Mary of St. Victor was already ill and had to take to her bed which she rarely left again. She suffered intensely, each day the attacks of pain became more frequent, and at night a high fever made sleep an impossibility. If, during the day, a short respite was granted her, she would take up her work for a few moments, or write with a trembling hand, those pencilled notes, since so highly treasured by her sisters in religion, who were all lovingly devoted to her. We quote one of these notes written to a religious who was also dying.

"Brussels, November 22, 1872.

I like to think that we are suffering, that we are agonizing, that we are dying together for the love of the Divine Crucified! Oh! how I want to love Him and to die for love of Him! . . ."

The room occupied by Mary of St. Victor was next to the chapel, which enabled her to receive Holy Communion several times a week. She was visibly failing and the slightest noise was torture to her, but she bore it all patiently. Kind and devoted, she followed all that went on in the house and the Society, forgetting herself in order to help and direct others. "No one will ever know," she said one day, "how dear the Society is to me."

Already, in the October of the preceding year, Father Olivaint had, from Heaven, heard the prayers of his children, when after a pilgrimage to his tomb, he had brought back Mary of St. Victor once more from the brink of the grave. She herself had then emphatically declared that it was the "last victory" and that she would never again be cured. Nevertheless, in her present desperate state, another novena was suggested and begun. On September 26th, the last day of this last novena, she was able to get up again and go down to the chapel and the parlour, but she was so feeble that just to look at her brought tears to one's eyes. This slight amelioration lasted until November, the last spark of a flame that was being extinguished.

In one of her last letters to her mother, Mary of St. Victor makes mention of a reliquary given to her by Father Olivaint and which she treasured and always wore:

". . . the more I look at my reliquary the more precious it becomes! Yet still more precious because the Father himself made me put it on before him, while making me promise *never* to take it off without his permission. I think so often of the day when, before leaving Paris, I wished to give it back to him. I shall never forget how, after having at first accepted, he gave it to me again saying: 'See, my child, keep it, I would not be at peace if you were without it.' "

At this time Mother Mary of Jesus was due in Rome, where she had to present the Rules of the Society to the Holy See. She hesitated about leaving, but Mary of St. Victor was the first to encourage her to go. On November 2nd, the Mother General left Brussels, never expecting to see her daughter again. The parting was painful for both, but by dint of energy the invalid dissembled her grief, whilst her mother tried to hide her own; but when she crossed the threshold, before getting into the carriage, Mother Mary of Jesus turned back with a last look of anguish. Mary of St. Victor had thought that she could easily bear her mother's absence, but she no longer had the strength to master her feelings, besides which she felt death drawing near. She passed her days sitting in a small arm chair, looking ever more lonely, thin and weak, but always praying, gentle, submissive, and never without some occupation.

On November 12th the Community of Brussels presented their feast day greetings to the Mother Superior, and Mary of St. Victor wished to join them. Hardly was she seated in their midst, when smiling, she looked round upon them all; but her

look plainly said good-bye and the tears flowed down her cheeks.

From Rome the Mother General wrote to her daughter:

"I have your little word in its shaky writing, which is very dear to me, but which tells me that my dearest child is still very weak and tired. I seem to see her always before my eyes, frail, trembling, wearied, and always coughing; that dear and sorrowful picture makes me inexpressibly sad."

On the appearance of alarming symptoms, the Mother Superior thought it advisable to recall the Mother General by telegram, wondering if she would arrive in time. Mother Mary of Jesus came from Rome to Brussels without a stop. At Paris she learnt that her daughter was still living: "Never," said the sister who accompanied her, "had our Mother been calmer and more serene than during this journey." She was trusting in God and nothing disturbed her peace. Mary of St. Victor was still living when her mother arrived at the convent in Brussels, but any hope Mother Mary of Jesus might have entertained, vanished when the invalid asked for the Last Sacraments. "Oh! Mother, Mother," cried Mary of St. Victor, on the arrival of the Mother General, "I thought that I was going to die without seeing you again, that was the greatest of all my sufferings, now that you are here I do not mind anything."

On the morning of November 28th, she prepared with great serenity to receive Extreme Unction. The Community assembled in her room and she greeted them with a smile. The Mother General, even

paler than usual, but very calm and courageous, silently helped the priest while he anointed the patient. After having received Holy Viaticum the invalid remained calm and peaceful. The last moment seemed to be rapidly approaching, but fifteen days of anguish yet remained. Mother Mary of Jesus passed the entire day beside her daughter, whose intelligence remained perfectly lucid, but daily her strength was failing and her sufferings were intensified by a tearing cough. During her sleepless nights her lips often moved, and when questioned she would reply: "I am talking to my Madonna."

She was no longer able to take any food, worn out with her cough and wasted with fever, the pain leaving her no respite except when she lost consciousness. All who saw her were moved to compassion. To the very end she retained her affability and continued to take an interest in the doings of the House and of each one.

On December 10th, the Bishop of Liège wrote to the Mother General:

"The news which I have been receiving all this last month, and which is becoming worse every day, tells me what you must be suffering. Doubly mother of your dear and holy daughter, whom God is going to take from you, you are stricken in your two-fold maternity and in each must be suffering horribly. In losing Olympe, Emilie loses her dearest and most legitimate affection in this world; in losing Mary of St. Victor, the Foundress, the Superior General of the Reparatrixes, loses her principal support, and feels that the strongest pillar of her work is being broken! Yes, humanly speaking, your double maternity is given up to the cruellest martyrdom.

But, on the other hand, Emilie loves Olympe so much that she cannot grieve to see that angel of virtue exchange a life of continual sufferings for an eternity of glory; and the Mother Foundress is not ignorant of the fact that the strongest supports for any work of God are those which come from Heaven. So Mother St. Victor, whom her sisters in religion love so dearly, on whom the Institute counted so legitimately, will not be wanting to your friendship nor to your confidence; she will obtain from God for her Mother and for her Sisters and for her Institute that which she would never have been able to procure for them by her co-operation on earth. Courage then, my dear Emilie, courage, confidence, and abandonment to God. Tell Olympe that I bless her from the bottom of my heart, that I recommend her to God in all my prayers and that I beg her not to forget me before Our Lord. Such are, my dear Emilie, the thoughts and sentiments which I felt I must share with you; they will remind you of an old friend who has never ceased to care for you, and who is glad to be able to bless you, to share your grief and to pray for you.

✠ Théodore, Bishop of Liège."

The Mother General, however, let nothing of her grief appear; she went about silent and rigid, still sufficiently mistress of herself, to direct certain needed repairs.

The least noise was agony to the dying nun, but she would not permit anything in the regular life of the House to be changed or altered out of regard for her. Above her head there was a work-room from which the noise of a sewing machine could be heard; not a murmur betrayed the fatigue this caused her. The Community bell was fixed near her room; it was decided one day not to ring it, Mother Mary of St. Victor asked the reason of the silence and forbade it to continue. On December

13th, the right foot was swelling and the doctor declared that death was imminent. A few hours after his visit the invalid gave a terrible cry and became unconscious; but as soon as she regained consciousness the torpor of the preceding days was succeeded by a terrifying agitation, and the silence by a strange volubility. This was the beginning of a horrible agony which was to last thirty-three hours. During this agony the dying religious did not seem troubled by any scruple of conscience, any terror; what preoccupied her, and what she expressed with indescribable vehemence was the thought that her mother could not possibly survive her. She cried out: "She will die, mad, mad with grief." The Mother General listening, choked back her tears. In the evening of the 13th this excessive excitement grew worse, then gave place for a short while to great tranquillity. Mary of St. Victor's expression became heavenly and as the Mother General went towards her daughter to raise her head: "Mother," she said, "I am so happy." "You are happy, my child?" "Yes, Mother, Oh! how beautiful the Blessed Virgin is, and Mary of St. Julienne, and Papa . . . and you, you have a beautiful place in Heaven!" It was only a flash in the darkness, the attacks began again and continued until eight o'clock next morning. Then the invalid fell back prostrate, her head bending forward, her lips half open and her gaze fixed. She remained in that state until the evening. All this time her mother never left her side, when not holding her daughter in her arms she remained standing by her bed. Almost a dozen times they thought the struggle over, but when the

mother bent forward meaning to kiss the forehead of her dead child, Mary of St. Victor would open her eyes again. The Mother General, no longer able to endure the sight of so much suffering begged God to shorten the martyrdom of her child. To her daughter she said: "Ah! I beseech you, my child, by obedience, die, go to Heaven, go to the Madonna! I can no longer bear to see you suffer so."

The Mother General had gone out to receive her son Edmund when, at twenty past nine, she was hastily recalled just in time to receive her daughter's last sigh. Mary of St. Victor was twenty-nine years of age.

The bed on which the body of Mary of St. Victor lay was covered with roses and lilies, while around her were placed lighted torches and candles, and large vases of lilies. There was nothing funereal about the little Oratory where the body had been exposed, in order that the public might come to pray beside her, and far from feeling fear, all were happy to be there. Mary of St. Victor's expression breathed such calm and sweetness and she looked so serenely beautiful, that one felt drawn to tell her everything, to ask her anything.

A child of eleven was gazing on her with such visible admiration, hardly able to turn her eyes away, that the religious, then in the oratory, asked her if the sight of a dead person did not frighten her. "Ah!" she replied quickly, "this one is not like the others, she is so beautiful, she is a saint!" During those two days over six hundred people

came to pray by Mary of St. Victor, not from idle curiosity, but in the greatest silence and recollection.

The morning following Mary of St. Victor's death, when after Mass, Mother Mary of Jesus wished to see her child again, all courage seemed to desert her, and she was unable to take a step. At length summoning up all her energy, she walked firmly towards the oratory. At the sight of her dead child she burst into tears and for the first time gave full vent to her sorrow. At the end of twenty minutes she arose, assumed her usual calm manner, gave orders as to what arrangements had to be made, received her family and took them herself to the oratory without showing the least emotion.

The remains of Mary of St. Victor were transported to the chapel of the Castle of Presle. As long as it was possible, the Mother General followed with her eyes the carriage which bore away the body of her child, then, when all was over, she took up her usual life as though nothing had been torn out of it. Nevertheless, a part of her soul had been torn from her and her very calm frightened those who knew the depths of her desolation. One day, thinking to console her, someone said: "In Heaven you will find your daughter again." Calmly, but very sorrowfully, the Mother General replied: "There, I shall no longer need her."

In writing to Monseigneur Rapp, who had expressed his sympathy, Mother Mary of Jesus says:

"For a long while I have wished to thank you for the kind and affectionate letter you were so good as to write to me during a time of cruel suffering. I know how much you loved and appreciated my dear child and conse-

quently you will understand all I have lost. She was my whole consolation, my sunshine in this gloomy world, my counsellor in my heavy and responsible work, it was she who helped me to carry the cross, inseparable from work begun for God's glory. Though she has left me quite alone I do not doubt that, from Heaven, she will still help me, but the void is there and will remain as long as I am on earth, and such a void is cruel to a mother's heart. Pray for me, Reverend Father, for I have the greatest need of prayer to help me to continue in this land of exile. Watch over my children in Strasburg whom my dearest child loved so dearly; be a father to them for her sake. . ."

On December 23rd Father Ginhac wrote to the Mother General:

"Bless and thank from the bottom of your heart, Our beloved Lord for all that He has done for your most happy child. What a life full of innocence and virtue He has granted her! What detachment from earth and all the vain satisfactions of the world! What love of humility, of recollection, of regularity! What zeal for the spiritual progress of the Society! What tender affection for all her sisters! What zeal for souls! Finally, what fervent piety, what generous love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, and what desire to make Him everywhere known and loved! Are not these the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit with which her beautiful soul was adorned during her short passage upon earth?

The long sufferings and the heart-rending agony of the last days, endured with invincible patience, may be considered as a sort of martyrdom crowning so holy a life.

Now, in the glory of Heaven, what must not be her happiness. Having no longer anything to fear or desire for herself, she will belong more to us, to her sisters, to the Society and to souls, than during her existence here below; her intercession with God for all your needs will not fail you and the continual services that she will render

you from Heaven, will be more profitable to you than all that she would have been able to do during a long life in this world. . ."

In a letter dated December 14th, the Mother Superior of Brussels writes:

". . . at one moment, thinking that she was only awaiting the 'fiat' of her mother in order to take her flight to Heaven, I knelt beside our Mother and trembling said to her: 'Mother, perhaps Jesus is waiting for you to offer Him this flower?' 'Ah!' she replied, 'I have already given it to Him a hundred times!' "

CHAPTER V

MOTHER MARY OF JESUS

Her Character—Spirit of Penance—Directors.

We have anticipated events in order not to break the thread of our narrative, but we must now go back and follow Mother Mary of Jesus in her own life as a religious and in the development of her work.

Before her Institute could be approved by the Church, or spread throughout the world, it was only proper that in the Foundress herself should be realized the ideal of a Reparatrix nun: that, like Our Lord, she should first show forth in herself what she would teach to others. This ideal she was to realize in a way that would not make imitation easy.

In November, 1858, the Paris Community removed from rue Monsieur to a large house at Vaugirard, and a tiny chapel was built on to the house. This house it was that saw the golden age of the Institute; an age of almost imprudent fervour, the period when the soul of the Foundress, alone, gave life to the family. Laborious undertakings had not yet worn out the strength of Mother Mary of Jesus, nor had heavy trials saddened her heart. From the witness of her contemporaries, from what remains to us of her papers and retreat notes, let us try to portray her as she was then.

It was sufficient to meet the Mother Foundress only once in order to fall under her influence, to appreciate her worth, and to remember her always. Some were at first a little intimidated at the resolute bearing which revealed such energy of will, but a single conversation sufficed to change respect into absolute confidence. "She gave God to souls"; this was the unanimous verdict, and perhaps the whole secret of her influence over others; she attracted and drew souls, imbuing them with faith in her mission; but in order fully to appreciate her gifts one had to live with her.

The Superior's room was next to the sanctuary and a small grill in the wall looked on to the Tabernacle. Seated at her desk in this small, narrow, airless room, Mother Mary of Jesus was always accessible; with no sign of impatience she would interrupt an urgent letter in order to give her opinion about some trifle submitted to her. Extremely active, yet without agitation, she herself despatched the voluminous correspondence which, growing with years, became a charge she never set aside. The drawing up of the Rules and the cares of government took up most of her time; then the parlour, above all in Paris, deprived her of what leisure remained to her and tired her greatly. She was, however, too kind to refuse to go, and she hated to keep anyone waiting.

The food taken by Mother Mary of Jesus was barely sufficient to maintain her strength. Her breakfast consisted of a little black coffee and a small piece of dry bread. In the world the Baroness d'Hooghvorst had not been able to observe one

day's abstinence, in religion she never took meat. Even at mid-day the Mother often took nothing but bread, and the appetite with which she ate was proof enough to her neighbours, better served than she, how insufficient was the food she allowed herself. In the evening she did not go to the refectory but took a slight collation in her room.

The Mother Foundress attached great importance to Community recreations, saying that the way in which they were spent revealed the spirit of the Community. Both on principle and from need, Mother Mary of Jesus made every effort to be present at them. Very punctual herself, she liked everyone else to be in time. There, no one was brighter nor took a keener interest in the smallest details of Community life. Simple, very frank, always interesting, she would willingly relate her journeys and reminiscences, but she never crushed anyone by her moral or intellectual superiority; she knew how to listen and to make people talk. Even in recreation she avoided idleness; an indefatigable worker herself, she wished that her daughters, whilst enjoying themselves, should know how to work at the same time.

At the close of a day so amply filled, Mother Mary of Jesus was very tired, and in the evening she would sometimes acknowledge that she felt exhausted. She made this no excuse, however, to send away those who might intrude upon her after she had retired for the night, and then when they had left her she would generally go for the last time to visit the sick. At length she would lie down on a thin straw mattress, the top of which she, later,

covered with a wooden cross. At midnight she got up, and from the half-opened grill adored the Blessed Sacrament: when the nuns praying in the chapel at that hour saw a glimmer of light shining above the choir they knew that their Mother was with them, watching near the Divine Master. If there were question of a soul to be saved, a favour to be obtained, an important affair to be undertaken, the Mother Foundress would ask her director's permission to prolong her watching indefinitely. Sometimes her desires were forestalled: when Father Olivaint was in despair about a soul he would ask Mother Mary of Jesus to offer her penances and to pass a night in prayer for this intention. Her simple manners, bright look and kind smile gave no one any suspicion of the austerity of her life. She was the first to practise what she repeated so often to her daughters, "I want victims in the service of Our Lord, but I want them willing, joyous and happy; those who lament and complain are not worthy of that honour."

Extremely practical, gifted with a real genius for organization, Mother Mary of Jesus summed up a situation in an instant and made definite plans. She foresaw everything, down to the smallest detail, and though far from being scrupulous she gave to each thing its due importance and could not tolerate anything *"sans gêne."* Wherever she entered she took in everything at a glance, and without saying anything, would put things displaced in their proper place, straighten a picture and pick up anything that might be lying about.

During the foundation of an Institute, when the

need of special graces is more imperatively felt, there is necessarily a time of almost exaggerated fervour. A priest wishing to moderate her austerity of life, the Mother Foundress replied: "We must love and glorify God." "That is all right," replied the priest, "but you would glorify Him longer." "God," she answered, "does not reward the time during which we have served Him, but rather the intensity of fervour with which we serve Him. The rest is accidental. The greater our labour on earth, the greater will be our rest in Heaven." But that which above all characterized Mother Mary of Jesus was her unbounded generosity in God's service. She gave herself unreservedly, never counting the cost and so simply, as though to give herself thus were the most natural thing in the world. Chivalrous and magnanimous, there was nothing of self-interest in her generosity, and it was almost an impossibility for her to distrust others. Often she would have done better to have held to her own ideas rather than submit to those proposed to her, for instinctively she guessed the best course to take. The most we can reproach her with is to have sometimes given her confidence to those who did not deserve it, and never to have been able to realize that all hearts were not like her own.

Exceptionally courageous and virile, she was, at the same time, very tender-hearted and maternal. However severely she had to reproach anyone, she never left them discouraged. Very impressionable, she felt things herself too keenly ever to wish deliberately to hurt anyone. She was compassionate

towards every kind of suffering and her wide sympathy gained the hearts of all.

She delighted in giving pleasure and making others happy, and no matter how busy she was, in order, for example, to be present at a profession, she would anticipate a journey rather than disappoint her daughter, or to give any other joy to her children she would interrupt her work and forget her personal sorrow. Hard on herself, she bore her misfortunes with great virility, but always simple she knew how to suffer without letting it be seen.

The Mother Foundress was incapable of rancour, she forgave and forgot every injury; the most justifiable resentment was unknown to her, and without the least affectation, in order to prove that all had been forgotten, she would try to show some special mark of confidence towards the one who had offended her. Were we to judge from appearances, it would be difficult to appreciate the perfect humility of Mother Mary of Jesus. With an energetic temperament, she was naturally born to command and in her gesture, look, and tone of voice there was something dictatorial, which grace had softened but not suppressed. She naturally swayed others by her moral superiority; less holy, she would have been authoritative, less kind, she would have been dreaded, whereas she was only loved and venerated. Of this air of authority, Father Olivaint used to say to her: "Take away half of it and there will still be more than enough left!" Such loyalty shone out from her blue eyes, while her penetrating look seemed to search so deeply into hearts; she acknowledged a fault so easily; she accepted and

frankly elicited criticism and was so grateful for the least attention. She wished that the Superior should be obeyed, but permitted that Mother Mary of Jesus should be humiliated, and permitted it with joy; it even seemed to cost her little, provided that she alone was hurt, but inevitably her daughters too were sometimes included.

Speaking of this period, Mother Mary of Jesus writes:

"My soul was filled with joy and happiness while I trod the path of suffering, of renunciation and of corporal penance for which I had an irresistible attraction. Far from dissuading me, my director urged me along this way. Each week the Father renewed the permission, fearing I should not be able to endure this kind of life."

But that which vivifies the soul wears out the body and wears it out too quickly. In July, 1863, the Mother Foundress, while at Toulouse, had a bad heart attack. It was not for long she allowed them to look after her, and soon, to the doctor's astonishment, in spite of the blisters with which she was covered, she went about, always at work, giving herself generously everywhere. Some years later Dr. Noguès said of her: "I must own that to me her life is a miracle. I cannot explain it. She has enough complaints to make four invalids, yet she always goes on, is always working." She had, however, during that time, to lessen the rigour of her austerities.

To judge by human prudence, it would seem that, as Superior General, she ought to have taken care of her health, the fulfilling of the duty of her state of life being a higher good than her desire of

mortification. But must we judge by human prudence? Even more than the heart, the soul, guided by God, has its reasons which the human intellect knows not of, and when grace inspires such a one to suffer for reparation, what ought to kill gives life and what ought to heal is the cause of death.

In consideration of her fervour and her mission, Mother Mary of Jesus needed sound direction. There is little doubt that had she been imprudently guided her impressionable nature would have carried her to excess. As we have said, however, God, in His providence, secured to her guides whom she could trust. Father Petit, S.J., had set her on her way and upheld her in it until his death in 1864. Father Studer had controlled this first direction and never ceased to be, both for the Superior and her work, a prudent counsellor. One day he wrote to her:

"My career as Provincial will be finished when my term of office at Toulouse expires, but whatever be my position in the future, believe me that whether with more influence or less I shall always devote myself heart and soul to the Society founded by my child for the glory of God and of Mary."

Until his death in 1875 he continued to assist Mother Mary of Jesus in all her doubts, exhorting her in numerous and charming letters to courage, confidence, and humility.

Two other incomparable masters of the spiritual life, Fathers Peter Olivaint and Paul Ginhac, were to support Mother Mary of Jesus in her difficult task. "God," said Father Olivaint, "gives you two

gardeners to cultivate your soul: one at Toulouse and the other in Paris," and Mother Mary of Jesus writes:

"The Master has given Father Olivaint just the word needed to set me on my feet, he acts admirably in concert with Father Ginhac to make me carry on in spite of everything. . ."

Father Olivaint is too well known to need any introduction to our readers.[1] The future martyr of the Commune had been Rector at Vaugirard for a year when, in November, 1858, the Reparatrixes came to live not far from his college. He soon appreciated their Retreat work and his devotedness to the Mother Foundress dated from his first meeting with her and only ceased with his death. On her side Mother Mary of Jesus gave him her entire confidence. In August, 1865, she wrote to him:

"My disposition towards you is one of such blind submission and such absolute obedience, that I verily believe if I were dead and you ordered me back to life, I should obey you."

Father Olivaint's direction was energetic but prudent, tactful and very kind. He never imposed a sacrifice but he would put it before one in such a way that a generous soul would have blushed to refuse it. It is thus that Mother Mary of Jesus relates to her daughter their first meeting:

"I had asked Father Ginhac if, in the absence of Father Petit, I might go to confession to Father Olivaint who often comes here. He replied: 'Yes.' I went then to confession to the Father, who understood me perfectly,

[1] Born in Paris on February 22, 1816; shot on May 26, 1871.

and who said to me: 'Ask very often for an absolution. I say more, steal it whenever you can.' He is a master of quite a different type, who has strongly recommended me to be faithful to the direction of Father Ginhac, which I assured him I had every intention of doing. That being agreed upon, he added: 'I will tell you always, my child, just what I think, and when it is not perfectly in accordance with the thought of Father Ginhac, you must tell me.' "

A martyr's death has not given to Father Ginhac the popularity of Father Olivaint. But he, too, left behind him such a trail of light that those who knew him seek him to-day amongst the Saints. He was naturally very strong, both physically and morally, and served God with a monotony that could be called heroic. No consolation, no extraordinary grace ever distracted his soul. His peculiar virtue consisted precisely in this: that never having received any extraordinary favour from the Master, he served Him for more than forty years with absolute fidelity. He was certainly one of the greatest ascetics of his time. His whole programme consisted in yielding absolutely nothing to nature. Near the end of his life his kindness was touching. In 1861, however, he was still a master to be dreaded. It was at this time that he came with Father Studer to visit the new house of Mary Reparatrix at Toulouse. Though he said very little he greatly edified Mother Mary of Jesus, and when Father Studer proposed him or another Father as Extraordinary Confessor, she asked for Father Ginhac. "Very well, I will give him to you," replied Father Studer, "but at the same time I warn you that he is

austere and severe. Are you not afraid of him?" "No," replied Mother Mary of Jesus, and very soon after she was able to open her soul to Father Ginhac. The Father understood her, encouraged her desire of perfection and finding in her a soul whose tendencies corresponded to his own, seconded her austere tastes in which he recognized a call from God. After a retreat made under his direction, she wished Father Ginhac to become her director. At first he hesitated, not sure of God's will in the matter. Father Petit was then still alive, and wisely enough Father Ginhac was loth to usurp the rôle of another; but he already showed the Mother Foundress every mark of confidence and at length acceded to her wishes. In October, 1861, he wrote to her:

"I will be for you, with the help of grace, all that Our Lord wishes, all that you yourself wish. I will always be the Father of your soul and you will be treated and looked upon as my child in Jesus Christ; until now I have never given you that name, the time had not come. . ."

Henceforth, whether near or at a distance, Father Ginhac, for fourteen years, directed Mother Mary of Jesus, especially during her annual retreat which, generally, she made at Toulouse. As he had foreseen, he sometimes made her suffer, for he intended to draw from this chosen soul all that it was capable of giving to God.

When, in 1874, Mother Mary of Jesus, having fixed her residence in Rome, had to abandon Father Ginhac's direction for one nearer at hand, he fully approved of her resolution. He had done his work,

he had helped to develop in the Mother Foundress and to communicate to her daughters that spirit of devotedness to God, of renunciation, of simple generosity which has become their chief characteristic. Father Ginhac's approbation with that of her other directors is the best assurance we could have of the virtues we have recounted.

CHAPTER VI

FOUNDATIONS—RULES

—Cures and Special Graces— Letters, Etc.

As soon as God's hour had struck, everything worked together to favour the expansion of the Society of Mary Reparatrix.

The influence radiating from the Blessed Sacrament exposed soon made itself felt around these centres of reparation, and the number of adorers in the convent chapels daily increased. Many finding it good to be there sought admission to the Society in order to spend their lives in the service of their Eucharistic King, their days in waiting on Him and their nights in watching near Him.

The retreats, too, a work as yet little known, were very well attended and appreciated. Many left with the desire to see such a work more widely spread, and were frequently the cause, or means, of seeing their desire accomplished and another house of the Society established.

In the work of new foundations Mother Mary of Jesus naturally took a leading part. In her undertakings, which were always inspired by supernatural views and followed up with determination and courage, she put into practice those words she loved to repeat: "Let us take it as a maxim that a work begun for God must be finished at any cost."

We have already spoken of Strasburg, the cradle

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CONVENT OF
MARY REPARATRIX.

of the Society, and the devotedness and paternal kindness of Monseigneur Raess was never to fail the Reparatrixes.

As early as 1859, the Mother Foundress undertook her first work on the Foreign Missions. Father St. Cyr, S.J., a Missionary from Madura, was then in France, looking for help for his Mission. After much persuasion on his part and no little hesitation on hers, Mother Mary of Jesus, with the warm approval of her Council and director, at last accepted the foundation he proposed.

Many of her children volunteered for this far-off Mission, and from among them Mother Mary of Jesus chose seven who set out from Marseilles in November. As the tender was leaving the shore with its band of generous apostles, Mother Mary of Jesus, calm until then, could no longer restrain her tears. Her grief would have been beyond all measure had she suspected the torments that the Madura Mission had in store for her.

After having decided upon the foundation of Toulouse in 1860, Mother Mary of Jesus made her promised pilgrimage to Loyola, where St. Ignatius, once more, as in the days at Rome, consoled and reassured her.

On her return the Mother Foundress presided at the opening of the Toulouse House on September 24th. For this house she had a love of predilection: Mary of St. Victor was named Assistant and Mary of St. Julienne made her Novitiate there. Whereas in Paris business and constant visitors took up all her time, at Toulouse she found peace and calm, the counsel of Father Studer and the energetic direction

of Father Ginhac. Henceforth, she made her yearly retreat in the Novitiate of Toulouse.

It was there she received the greatest spiritual favours and made her most generous resolutions. It was there, too, that, in reward of her courage and to extend her influence, God gave her a power namely: to console and cure. Of its effects we shall speak later.

Every founder must guard against a too rapid multiplication of new houses. From 1861 Father Ginhac warned his penitent of this danger, writing to her in November of that year he says:

"In general, I do not approve of a too rapid expansion of religious orders recently founded. . . It both weakens and exhausts them. . . Here act with circumspection, pray, consult, and then, with God only in view, refuse or accept. . ."

The foundation in London, in 1862, we have already related. This was followed by that of Tournai in January, 1863, and that of St. Denis in the Island of Reunion in November of the same year. The year 1865 saw the opening of the House in the Via Borgo at Rome, and 1866, Liège in Belgium and Port Louis in the Mauritius Isles.

For a long while the Mother General had wished for a House in Paris more central than Vaugirard. This was found in the rue de Calais and was opened on October 23, 1869. The terrible events of the War, however, in which her daughters were to share, came to thwart the Mother Foundress's projects. When the enemy withdrew from France, the work of reparation was more necessary than ever for the moral reconstruction of the country.

By his martyrdom, better than by any of his teaching, Father Olivaint had impressed upon the Mother Foundress and her daughters the necessity of self-sacrifice for the saving of the people of France. The Reparatrixes understood the language of him whom, with good reason, they called their father, and carried on their work with new courage. Nantes was the first foundation established after the War, and the same year, 1871, saw the foundation of Le Mans. As we have seen, the House of Brussels was opened in September, 1872, while a few months earlier, in July, a House had been opened at Liesse.

Helped by the great charity and generosity of her niece, Baroness de Brienen, Mother Mary of Jesus was enabled, in 1874, to open a House of the Society in Pau. From Pau the Mother General's anxious thought turned to Spain where, under many difficulties and with great labour, the Reparatrixes were establishing their first foundation in Seville. While the Society of Mary Reparatrix was extending its works and propagating its name, the Holy See continued to bless it. The Society was, for the second time, approved by a decree dated October 1, 1869. On March 15, 1873, another decree approved the Constitutions for a period of seven years. Mother Mary of Jesus did not live to see the definitive approbation of her work, Pope Leo XIII. only signing it on April 18, 1883.

But the establishment of new foundations was but half the work of Mother Mary of Jesus as Foundress. She had yet to give to her daughters Constitutions and Rules. This obligation had been, from the very

beginning, a serious preoccupation for the Mother Foundress. She had quite decided that the Constitutions and Rules should be inspired by those of St. Ignatius; had not the Saint often enough told her that one day she would follow his rule?

She could not, however, accomplish this work of adaptation alone. She needed someone to help her who had a thorough knowledge of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, and who, at the same time, entered completely into her views.

Father Petit had at first helped to draw up daily regulations; Father Studer had often set himself to the task, but his office as Provincial left too little time for his concurrence to be sufficient. It was on Father Ginhac that the labour of helping the Mother General in this important work devolved. It would have been difficult for St. Ignatius to find a representative more penetrated with his spirit and who, at the same time, understood so well the intentions of the Mother Foundress. The Constitutions of the new Institute were the result of this mutual understanding.

Had she been left to herself, there is little doubt that Mother Mary of Jesus would, in the Rules, have insisted on more corporal penance. Father Ginhac, though there was none more austere, moderated this tendency. Besides, the Foundress knew that her Society was not a Carmel, that it must be accessible to those called to reparation and yet having only mediocre strength. Furthermore, those works to which the Society is devoted make the life, of its very nature, a fatiguing one. The principal good in view should not, therefore, be sacrificed to

CHAPEL OF THE MOTHER HOUSE. ROME.

secondary advantages. The Rule, nevertheless, leaves free scope for generosity. The spirit of penance is essential to the work of reparation, and nothing is more favourable to this spirit than that each soul should follow its individual attraction, directed by obedience.

Both the collaborators brought to the adaptation of the Rules their knowledge of souls, of the interior life, and the powerful help of their prayers and penances, while the efforts of both were founded on their ardent desire to procure God's glory alone. The result was a well-balanced work, at the same time ideal and practical, suited to modern needs and which dowered the Society with a government that was temperate and strong. Mother Mary of Jesus did not intend to bequeath to her Institute one of those incomplete systems which are modified and completed by chance occurrences. Her chief merit is, on the contrary, to have seen from the very beginning the exact plan of her Order, and without hesitation to have herself marked out its rôle and its aim.

Begun and continued at Toulouse, the adaptation of the Constitutions was finished in Belgium in 1870.

Since 1865 Rome had become the centre of the Society and the official residence of the General. But in spite of her ever-increasing sufferings, Mother Mary of Jesus's courage enabled her to be everywhere, not only by her counsels and her letters, but also by her immediate and personal influence. No distance, no illness, could stop her. Her influence on souls was exceptional, as will be seen if we

study her in her spiritual intercourse with her daughters.

It appears that one day Monseigneur Darboy said that there were only three people before whom he quailed, and one of them was Madame d'Hooghvorst. By the simple force of her will, Mother Mary of Jesus was, in reality, capable of vanquishing the most energetic resistance; with greater reason did she gain the confidence of her daughters. By her activity, her intelligence, her excellent natural gifts, she would have been a ruler anywhere; but she owed her religious influence to higher qualities: to her faith, her supernatural dignity, to that gift she had of radiating God. As well as this, God deigned, doubtless in order to authorize her mission, to communicate to Mother Mary of Jesus a superhuman power. Some of its wonderful effects have been too publicly verified for us to hesitate to publish them. We will, therefore, relate a few of the most important of these favours.

A postulant came from Nantes to Toulouse in November, 1862. Mademoiselle Berthe H— had suffered for seven years from loss of voice, which, in its resistance to treatment, seemed incurable. The Mother General alone thought that this infirmity would not make her admission impossible. With the habit, the postulant was to receive the name of St. Stanislaus Kostka. On November 13th, the feast of her future patron, the Mother General asked Berthe to read in the Refectory at supper. She opened the Holy Scriptures and commenced with a very feeble voice. "Louder," commanded the Superior. The reader obeyed and sustained her

voice during the whole of supper. At the recreation following, she was asked to read a letter. The Superior of Toulouse, who was the postulant's sister, could hardly control her emotion. Since then no trace of the old infirmity remains. This cure made a great stir in Nantes where the novice was well known; the Bishop congratulated her and asked her for a detailed account of a favour which did not seem to have any natural cause. Is this cure to be called a miracle, or the happy result of powerful suggestion? The reader must judge: but the facts, as we have related them, are beyond dispute.

On March 24, 1863, Mother Mary of Jesus, arriving at Toulouse, found several invalids in the Community. One particularly, Mlle. Marie de T—, had just received Extreme Unction. Having entered the Society on October 2, 1862, it was not long before the postulant experienced an affection of the spinal cord with which she had been seriously threatened for two years. The most energetic treatment only seemed to aggravate the disease. She could no longer sit up, and writing was now impossible. Violent attacks of tetanus added to her helplessness, each attack threatening to prove fatal. Two days after the Mother General's arrival, she had a more violent attack than ever. However, on March 25th, Father Ginhac had ordered Mother Mary of Jesus to ask God to cure the invalids in the Community. Having received this order the Mother went to the postulant whom she found in the throes of an attack. After a short struggle with herself, drawing near to the invalid, she said to her: "In the name of Jesus you will not have another attack,

I forbid you, and also you will be cured." During Mass the Mother General prayed fervently for her patient who, at the same instant, felt herself cured. She got up, dressed, and walked. Utterly amazed for a moment, the Infirmarian stood stock still, then flew to tell everyone the good news. The Mother General had returned to the chapel and was still praying. When she came out Marie de T— could only throw herself, in tears, at her feet: "That is right," said Mother Mary of Jesus, "you have obeyed me as I obeyed Father Ginhac." When the doctor came at his usual hour Mlle. de T— received him in the parlour. After having verified the radical change which had supervened in the state of the invalid, the doctor did not hesitate to proclaim his admiration. "All that a doctor would have been able to do," he added, "would have been to alleviate her sufferings and to abate the progress of an incurable disease."

Mlle. de T—, cured, received the habit on April 18th following, together with the postulant who had recovered her voice on the feast of St. Stanislaus.

In this same year, 1863, several other religious, as well as persons in the world, received similar favours.

Towards the end of January, Mother Mary of St. Edmund, Assistant at Vaugirard, was called to the foundation of Tournai, there to fulfil the same charge. Having been nursing a dying novice, her strength was somewhat exhausted and that, with the privation and fatigue incidental to new foundations, and the rigorous climate, sufficed to cause a

real breakdown and she developed a serious attack of pleurisy. Though there was no imminent danger, Mother Mary of St. Edmund was not recovering, and the most careful nursing proved of no avail. Her extreme weakness was an invincible obstacle to her cure, and all hope of saving her was lost. Mother Mary of Jesus, on the advice of Father Petit, commenced a novena to obtain the recovery of the invalid, after which she wrote to her: "Not doubting, dear child, your obedience, I come to tell you in the name of Jesus to get up, walk and be cured, not without suffering, but with enough health to enable me to make use of you in the Society." At the command of her Superior, Mary of St. Edmund, without hesitation, asked for her clothes, got up, dressed herself alone, and after having thanked God, wrote to the Mother General:

"What, dearest Mother, did you ask of your poor St. Edmund? to obey! You well knew she would do so without doubting. Yes, Mother, I can say that I obeyed your voice, and though your child was longing to go to Heaven, she will now devote herself, with all her heart, to work with her Mother. How could Our Lord permit you to choose me to be the subject of a miracle of obedience? It was to manifest His power that He chose the most insignificant and the most unworthy."

Mary of St. Edmund died in 1893 from a pleurisy that carried her off in a few days. After her cure she had worked for thirty years for the Society with unfailing devotedness, and died Superior of the House in Jerusalem.

The year that saw these cures was also that of numerous foundations. It was the year when,

abandoning herself to the direction of Father Ginhac, Mother Mary of Jesus sacrificed herself with unreserved generosity. Seeing that God thus blessed the apparent folly of her austerity, who shall deny its wisdom?

The cure of Mlle. Marie de Régnon, daughter of the Marquis de Régnon, at Nantes, was still more notorious. Marie had been helpless for eight years from the effect of a disease of the spinal cord, every treatment had been tried in vain and most of them had only added to the torture of the patient. On the advice of Father Petit, Mother Mary of Jesus began a novena for her, to end on the Feast of St. Stanislaus. On November 7th, the Mother General wrote a letter to Mlle. de Régnon, ordering her by obedience to "get up, walk and be cured on the 13th, the feast of St. Stanislaus. . ." It was only with great repugnance that Marie had consented to take part in a novena. The Mother General's letter, however, gave her not only confidence, but the conviction that she would be cured. Though the night of the 12th to the 13th had been passed in a veritable agony, she asked to be dressed on the morning of the 13th. Rising, she got out of bed, knelt down—she who had been unable to move for eight years—and called for her youngest brother, on whose arm she went downstairs, to the stupefaction of all who met her.

In the following March, Marie de Régnon entered the Society, taking the name of Mary of the Resurrection. For five years she enjoyed perfect health and under the direction of Father Olivaint she very soon reached a high degree of perfection.

Quite suddenly, in 1867, though strong and active, she was attacked by rapid consumption. One day when she seemed on the point of expiring, Father Olivaint said to her: "With the name of Mary of the Resurrection you can only die on Good Friday." The invalid seemed to find new life, but on April 10, 1868, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, she died, and it was Good Friday!

We may mention yet one more cure belonging to the year 1874. In the month of August a lay Sister, Mary of St. Vital, was reduced by rheumatism to a state of general paralysis, and could sleep only when under morphia. The Mother General was then making her annual visit. One day she said to the invalid: "This cannot continue, you must take up common life again. Are you a child of obedience?" "Yes, Mother," replied Mary of St. Vital, very surprised. "Very well, we are going to ask the Blessed Virgin to cure you and we shall make a novena to her which will finish on September 1st. All the Mothers and Sisters are going to promise some prayer or good work in thanksgiving, I give them all permission to see you and give you in writing the promises they have made for you." The invalid's drawer was soon full of notes, witness and tribute to the charity of her Sisters. There was, however, no sign of any amelioration, and on the evening of the 31st, the Mother General went to see the invalid saying to her again: "Mary of St. Vital, are you a child of obedience?" "Yes, Mother." "To-morrow morning, then, you will receive Holy Communion before the Community Mass; when you have made your

thanksgiving you will get up, dress, and at ten minutes to eight you will come to me in my room." The Mother, tenderly blessing her child, withdrew, but the poor patient remained very anxious, for she was suffering as usual, and her night was a very painful one. In the morning of September 1st they brought the Sister her clothes. "Help me a little," she said to the Infirmarian, "I feel so weak." "No," replied the Infirmarian, "our Mother said you would dress alone and I am going to Mass." Very slowly Sister St. Vital accomplished her dressing and, trembling all over, went to knock at Mother General's door. "Well," said Mother Mary of Jesus, very calmly, "you are late, I was waiting for you." Immediately, Mary of St. Vital resumed regular life, and until 1902 was commission Sister at Pau.

Two other extraordinary facts have remained celebrated in the annals of the Society.

September 12th saw the death, at Vaugirard, of the first choir Novice to die in the Society, Bertha d'Heininger d'Eriswyl, in religion, Mary of St. Ferdinand. Count d'Eriswyl, Military Attaché at the Court of Naples, had known Count d'Oultremont well in Italy, and had been very surprised to find the Baroness d'Hooghvorst wearing the religious habit. He gave her his only daughter who, after three months of novitiate, fell ill of phthisis and was dying. The patient did not think that the end could be so near and when she was told, found it hard to be resigned. It was suggested that she should take her vows of devotion, which Father Olivaint received. During the evening of the 11th,

Father Olivaint again came to see her, encouraging her not to be afraid of death.

Mary of St. Ferdinand dearly loved the Mother General, who had to leave for Strasburg. As her departure distressed the invalid she said to her: "Do not die until I return." In spite of this command it was evident at 11.0 p.m. that the invalid was going to die. Quite suddenly, about 11 o'clock, those who were watching, saw her, fully conscious, make an effort to straighten herself. Then she opened her arms and cried out with delight: "Mother." "What Mother do you see?" asked her Superior, astonished. "Our Mother, of course," "Your Mother, who has been dead many years, or our Mother Mary of Jesus?" "Our Mother Mary of Jesus," replied Mary of St. Ferdinand quite surprised at these questions. For a long time she seemed to listen to someone speaking to her, then becoming very calm she died. Two days later the Mother General arrived to see Mary of St. Ferdinand laid out in the chapel.

Another religious, Mary of St. Adrian, was dying in Paris in October, 1865. The Mother General had had to leave for Toulouse in September, and this departure greatly distressed the dying nun. In order to reassure her the Mother told her that if Our Lord would allow it she would come and give her her blessing before she died, but that she had to fear nothing, for her death would be peaceful. In the evening of October 11th, Mother Mary of St. Adrian received Extreme Unction. Later, between 8 and 9 o'clock, the religious who was watching beside the invalid, saw her sit straight up in bed,

turn her head and look fixedly. After a few minutes she quietly lay down again, and died without saying what she had seen, but two days earlier she had affirmed she would not die without seeing the Mother General.

The young sister of the deceased, Mary of St. Edmund, was Assistant at Toulouse. On the 13th, in the evening, during the Litanies, at which all the Community were present, the immobility of Mother Mary of Jesus, who remained behind in the chapel, surprised all. Mary of St. Edmund, anxious, went a little later to the Mother General begging her to give her news of her sister. After having looked steadily at her questioner for some time the Mother General replied: "To you I can tell all. I have just seen her, she is nearing her end. While I was at the Litanies, I do not quite know how, but I found myself transported near her, she was very calm and I gave her my blessing and asked her if anything were worrying her and she said, 'No.' I then promised her my Communion to-morrow. She was in a large bed in the room under the patronage of St. Francis Borgia, there was a stove near the window and several Mothers were with her."

On Saturday the 14th, the Mother General was, as usual, making her meditation in the tribune before Mass. While she was praying, Mary of St. Adrian appeared to her and asked her to offer her Communion for her. From this moment Mother Mary of Jesus was suffering until Tuesday morning. Mary of St. Edmund, still anxious about her sister, wished to know what had happened to her. "She is near me," acknowledged the Mother Gene-

ral, "like yourself in her religious habit, she is enjoying neither God nor me, that is her purgatory." "And you, Mother," said Mary of St. Edmund, "why are you suffering so much? Is it for Mary of St. Adrian?" "Yes," she replied, "it is in order that she may quickly go to Heaven."

The next day, the 16th, the Mother General had been able to go down to the parlour to receive Father Ginhac. Mary of St. Edmund joined them. "Father," she said to Father Ginhac, "Mary of St. Adrian is near our Mother and I cannot see her." "Then," replied the Father, "she must leave here, it is not her place to remain on earth. We are going to tell her to go away, to-morrow I shall offer the Holy Sacrifice for her and she will leave for Heaven."

The next morning after Father Ginhac's Mass and the Communion of Mother Mary of Jesus, Mary of St. Adrian had disappeared, and the Mother recovered her health. Mary of St. Edmund again questioned the Superior, who replied with a radiant look: "She is no longer here, she has gone to Heaven."

Enclosed within the circle of her intimates as these graces were, they were, none the less, known outside. Monseigneur de Montpellier wrote to the Mother General, July 7, 1864:

"You know that from the beginning I have laid down two conditions for my approbation. The first that you should obtain that of the Pope, the second that you should work miracles. It appears, if I am well informed, that both are realized. I congratulate you. If to work miracles is not always an infallible proof of sanctity, it is at least

a sign that God wishes to use us, and that is always very consoling. . . Pray much for me and ask God to work a little miracle for my poor soul which has great need of one."

Father Olivaint writes:

"I need not ask you to pray for me very specially. You know what you must ask for me. Insist upon it then when you are near the good Master. You obtain from Him many graces even for strangers, should I not have the right to accuse you if you obtain nothing for your poor Father in Our Lord? I ask you again to offer your prayers and your sufferings for an intention that wearies my soul."

"The Mother Foundress was venerated as a saint," says one of those who knew her best, "and at the same time loved as a Mother." What distinguished her was the tact and simplicity with which she went about her apostolate.

"I add to your troubles and your difficulties in begging you to write to me often," Father Studer one day wrote to her, "but your letters make me love the good Master. Give yourself a little trouble for that, I will make it up to you when I am a saint."

There was nothing narrow in this generous soul, she knew the world and life, and excelled in urging to what was good, though she understood the resistance of nature and compassionated weakness. Her direction was loyal, firm and maternal; she forced no one to follow by her way. As Superior she certainly expected to be obeyed, and knew how to repress the spirit of criticism and to recall to respect for authority, and this without any irritability or thought of self. Her calm energy accustomed her daughters to an obedience that was both frank and

supernatural. Mother Mary of Jesus was too noble a character ever to constrain anyone to enter the Society, or even submit to her personal influence, but when a vocation was evident she upheld it without disguise and without weakness; when a soul had recourse to her she never again forsook it.

Two of her means of apostolate seem, above all, to merit attention, her letters and her conferences.

Her correspondence, or what has been discovered of it, is so considerable that the marvel is how so busy a woman could find time to write so much. But nothing stopped her, neither illness, anxieties nor journeys. At the end of her busiest days Mother Mary of Jesus would set herself to her task. If you told her she was too tired to write: "I must," she replied, "console this child." And her pen flew, prolific, rapid, so rapid that the regular lines she traced in large, sloping writing, portray a heart overflowing with kindness, frankness and trust, but become easily illegible. Her correspondents had to give themselves up to laborious deciphering in order to find the thought expressed by a line of uniform down strokes.

Picturesque, mystical, and practical by turn, the Mother had a way of interrupting an outpouring of divine love, or the avowal of a crushing sorrow, by such words as these: "Let us come to practical things!" "Let us now speak of business. . ." "Now here is a list of commissions. . ." Nothing interfered with her practical mind, and the homely nature of her womanly advice added weight to her moral direction. To follow it gave assurance of not being led astray.

Mother Mary of Jesus had no favourites, she gave herself equally to all. What she counselled her daughters was supernatural fidelity to their religious duties, confidence, and love of God. To combat discouragement she employed all her tact, devotedness and kindness. Most often she waited until a soul had recognized her faults before she pointed them out, and then she did so with great discretion. She seemed inspired when she spoke of the Cross, and of suffering endured for the love of Christ Our Lord. In return she expected from her daughters a warm, frank affection. Writing to one of them, she said: "I do not like coldness, it makes me ill under every form." She knew how to be gay, but was a stranger to, and detested every sort of affectation.

We shall quote a few passages from her letters:

"January 4, 1862.

What I recommend to you is to be humble in *daring all* for God; humility must not, must *never* make you say: 'For me I dare not do that: I am unworthy of this, incapable of that: that is for souls who are more holy, more capable, more full of God.' No, never, never, these phrases. I do not want that kind of humility at any price and have no use for it. I want a true humility, which recognizes in general that it is unworthy of everything, and which in spite of that, says to all obstacles it may meet with on its way, 'Let me pass, I am going to God.' Ah, yes, dear child, be humble like that, but to remain where you are, to hide yourself and keep silence, *no, a thousand times no,* I do not want humility of that sort. . ."

"November, 1858.

Yes, my dear child, humiliations are necessary for us and we must not fear them, for they draw us nearer to the beloved Master, and in order to be near Him, what would

one not do? If you saw Him, Our Saviour Jesus, there, a little way from you, and that in order to go and throw yourself at His feet and assure Him of your love you had to push through a crowd, which would load you with affronts, insults and mockeries, would you draw back? No, I am certain you would not. Well, to-day, before uniting yourself more intimately, before drawing closer to this dear and gentle Lamb, you have undergone a humiliation, you have become a little more like Him, and He loves you a little better. Remain then in peace, in that sweet peace of love, which does not know how to fear but only how to love. Oh, the soul who truly loves Jesus no longer fears even to displease Him, she feels that to hurt the Heart of Him, who is the object of her love is not possible, she does not even fear it. See, dear child, what peace, what liberty, what calm this gives. She no longer cares what may happen, for she knows that everything is arranged by her Beloved, and she will never have more than she can bear. Why then worry about the future? Oh, remain at peace in the Master's Heart, giving yourself up to Him entirely for all that He may want from you, right through your life. Let there be no more *self* but let Jesus alone live and reign in you, let Him command and ask, for our good and dear Master is so pleased when He has only to express a desire. Put yourself very specially under the protection of Mary, she will tell you better than I can, what Jesus wants from you. . ."

Some thoughts which should animate a Reparatrix taken from a general letter written to her Daughters:

"Being obliged to make reparation for herself and others, a Reparatrix must doubly belong to her Lord and Master, Jesus, and her heart must become, as much as possible, another heart of Mary, our Mother and the Mother of Jesus. . .

Mary our Mother, being only occupied with God Our Lord and His glory, all in our lives, by Mary's side and

through her heart, must be for God, His glory and reparation.

Let us not forget that the life of Mary was so pure, so perfect, so intimate with Jesus, that never anything in her offended His divine eyes. What does so perfect a model require of us except a life of perfection, which reproduces as far as possible, that of our well-beloved Mother, in order that the Heart of Jesus be not wounded by us. . . To make reparation whilst wounding is not possible, the virtues, therefore, of Mary, the heart of Mary, her whole life must be, as much as possible, retraced in us. . .

We must, I repeat, my dear daughters, according to the desire of Mary our Mother, endeavour to continue her mission on this earth, where she is no longer, surrounding her Divine Son with our care, adoration and love, as she herself would do, were she living amongst us; we must consent to suffer and accept all in order to make reparation by our devotedness, for the outrages with which Our Lord is overwhelmed principally in the Sacrament of His love, and assist by our feeble prayers the Church of God and His Vicar upon earth so often exposed to the persecutions of the wicked and the insults of the impious. To be Mary for Jesus, to be Mary everywhere and always, as much as our miseries and weakness permit, is the rôle of the Reparatrix, that is her life, that is what she must accept, love and will at all costs in order to correspond to her vocation. Ordinary virtue, ordinary devotedness, ordinary suffering, cannot suffice her in order to follow Mary and imitate Our Lord."

AMERICAN NOVITIATE. DETROIT.

CHAPTER VII

SUFFERINGS

Abandonment—Schisms—Deliverance.

" 'You have never felt My love to this point, it is new to you; you will feel it still more if you are faithful. What I want to show you now is how much I love you, how much you must love Me, and then see if you will ever be able to refuse Me a life of sorrow and privation, if it should please Me to impose it.' I accepted all that Our Lord wished of me; my good Master came to seek my consent to a suffering of which I seem to get a glimpse. When will this suffering be imposed on me? I do not know, but the moment is drawing near and my soul is waiting."

Mother Mary of Jesus wrote these words on June 23, 1862. At the end of her Thirty Days' Retreat in 1864 she understood that God was again inviting her to climb the road to Calvary.

In 1866 during a kind of transport her look betrayed immense suffering. She was asked afterwards what she had learned that could be so painful, she replied: "I know that I am going to suffer through my children."

Her life until then, had certainly not been exempt from suffering, and her burden of trials would have crushed a less heroic soul. But to uphold her in her struggles, her griefs, her maladies, and her disappointments she had always experienced great spiritual consolation. Then in her directors, God had provided her with faithful supporters. Lastly, her work was prospering, and near her, never far away,

there were her two daughters, the hope and consolation of her life.

The mysterious trial under which Our Lord Himself had to bow at the moment of His Passion, abandonment, she had not yet completely known. It was to this martyrdom that the Master was now going to invite her. All that she loved, all that on which she counted, even God Himself will seem to betray her, and the great complaint of Calvary: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" will be repeated by her in an agony, almost of despair.

Had she experienced this trial earlier it would perhaps have paralysed her courage and abated her activity. Her work was now too far advanced for the moral agony of the Foundress to expose it to destruction and God was able to accomplish in His servant the work of final purification. As we already know, the suffering foreseen by Mother Mary of Jesus and of which her children were to be the cause was realized in the fullest degree. Like the Mother of Jesus at the foot of the Cross she stood heartbroken by the bedside of her dying children, accepting generously the sacrifice of all that was dearest to her on earth. Before Mary of St. Victor's cure, when her mother almost despaired of saving her, she wrote:

"Oh, it is awful to suffer like this without a soul to whom one can say a word. Father Ginhac writes me kind letters but there are sorrows he does not know, neither that of a mother nor the despair of finding oneself alone, without the Divine Master and as though deserted by Him. The Blessed Virgin is my resource and to her alone I go."

These last lines allude to a trial which, allowed by Providence, was all the more painful to Mother Mary of Jesus because it coincided with other sorrows. We do not wish to pass it over in silence, for it shows how God uses everything to purify souls. We believe that Father Ginhac had been devoted to no one as he had been to Mother Mary of Jesus. A copious correspondence shows how attentive the Father was over a period of ten years to this soul of whom he had not in vain taken charge. Persuaded that God must take the place of all, he did not perhaps sufficiently understand the legitimate grief of a mother, who saw her daughter dying. Did the mother's heart exaggerate the advice, which included no blame? An aching heart is easily hurt, and during that period of grief Father Ginhac's words brought no longer any consolation. Unhappily, to make matters worse, a local Superior, with whom the Mother General had had some difficulty, prejudiced her director against her. This added to the uneasiness felt by Mother Mary of Jesus and made Father Ginhac's direction all the more crucifying.

"During the whole of my daughter's illness," we read in her private notes, "my heart, which had just been crushed by the death of her sister, was in sore need of help. Every week, as usual, I wrote to Father Ginhac, to whom I opened my whole soul. But Our Lord permitted that his letters were less consoling than usual, they were more severe, and on March 24th, the eve of the day on which my daughter was cured, I received a letter from him, hard and severe, reproaching me for my too natural feelings towards my children. This letter crushed me, for I was not expecting it. The visit to my brother, pro-

longed by force of circumstances (her daughter's illness), was badly judged by Father Ginhac, I became sad, and little by little, great discouragement took hold of me."

A Cyrenean was at hand, however, to help Mother Mary of Jesus to carry her heavy Cross in the person of Father Olivaint, whose extreme kindness both to her and her daughters never failed. To him Mother Mary of Jesus had confided her difficulties on her return to Paris, and he tried by discreet advice to remedy this delicate situation.

"My poor child," he wrote on August 22nd, "you did well to write to me. No, you cannot bear all that alone. I suffer with you, believe me. But what is to be done? First of all let us be quite convinced that all this comes from God. Let us look higher than creatures: it is evident to me, that in all this Our Lord has a very special design for your sanctification. Then submit from the bottom of your heart. Who knows even, if the cure of your dear child is not attached to this suffering, to the humble, generous acceptance of it? Recommend the affair to Father Ginhac's good angel. I bless you and I bless all your sufferings in order to change them into acts of love."

A few days later he writes again:

"I begin to rejoice at the little conspiracies that have taken place down there. For a long while that little mine has been smouldering secretly, it is well that it has exploded. The result, I am sure, will be to consolidate your work, and by the suffering it has caused you, sanctify you in a very special way. Before God something would have been wanting to you, if one of your children had not presented you with this Cross. You must be detached even from your work. Confidence and courage."

Hardly had she arrived in Rome in 1867 than there, too, she found sorrow awaiting her in the

death of her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Bassano. Over fatigue had also affected her eyes and her sight was threatened. Several of the Houses had financial difficulties, which added to her solicitude, while her weariness of soul never left her.

"I pray," she writes to one of her daughters, "and ask prayers that the dear Master will come to our rescue, then I remain sad for I feel that it is I who am the cause of this painful business, if I were more humble, more faithful, that would not happen. What can be done my dear child? Only to put me on one side, that certainly would be the best thing to do, not that I refuse to work, but because I work so badly for the glory of God and the good of the Society. You understand that all that mixed with money affairs, family difficulties and troubles, undermines my health which is not brilliant; neither does it rest me, but what matter if God's will is done? I always think that when I am used to a thread I shall be put aside like an old rag which is good for nothing. That thought is to my liking for, at the bottom, we are nothing else, as long as we can be of use we are employed, afterwards there is the rest of eternity."

The labours and trials that were crushing Mother Mary of Jesus never prevented her from fulfilling a single one of the duties of her charge. After having visited her Houses she left for Rome in the November of 1868 to open the new Convent in the Via Sant' Isidoro.

While the Mother General spent herself with such heroic energy, no one around suspected the intensity of her moral suffering. Darkness, however, reigned in her soul and the abandonment of God was added to that of men. If it was on the Cross that Our Lord uttered those mysterious words to His Heavenly

Father, it was also at the summit of her Calvary, that Mother Mary of Jesus experienced the divine abandonment. As fully as she had once tasted the joys of spiritual consolation, so now was she plunged into the depths of desolation.

It is very rarely that a soul attains to sanctity without passing through this painful trial of apparent abandonment by God. By the flame of that earthly purgatory the soul already detached from creatures is, as it were, detached even from God. During these storms the virtues of faith, hope and charity, by which we adhere to God are severely tried.

In its weakness the soul is racked in these states of distress, in which God seems to be as if hidden and withdrawn from it. His love is a consuming fire, transforming and refining. Yet the strongest grow faint and weak under the fiery heat which is to work their transformation. There is hardly a soul called to contemplation which is not condemned on earth to pass through such purifying trials, which masters of mystical theology name a purgatory and a hell.

From 1868 Mother Mary of Jesus experienced the sufferings of this earthly purgatory.

She then wrote to Father Olivaint:

"December 29th.

For two days I have been wanting to write to you, my kind and good Father, and it has been impossible, everyone takes my time, but to-day I have kept it, for I feel the need of talking a little to him, whom Jesus has given me for Father. What shall I say to you about myself except that I am passing through a terrible suffering of which I cannot, and do not want, to speak, for it would be quite useless and only increase my torment.

For some months, as you know, Jesus has kept my soul in a veritable purgatory, He is the Master and has the right to do with it what He wills and I am pleased that He deigns to accept my suffering. But, my very dear Father, Oh, how He can torture a soul, when He makes her bear the weight of His contempt, of His anger, of His justice, of His scorn: when He remains pitilessly impassive, regarding her, as it were, from afar, without a word of pity, but wanting her to suffer and alone, as if in an immense desert. As I told you, I *see* Him always, He is good enough never to hide Himself from me, my soul always sees Him whom she loves and I know that this is an immense grace, but to see Him from purgatory without being able to speak to Him, or to get a word from Him, to refresh my soul which is burning with an indescribable fever. Father, there is no name for this!

I was far from well yesterday, winter is a terrible time for me; still it is a suffering that I can offer to Him who has accepted them all for me. That which is most difficult in this state is to keep possession of one's soul, to remain gentle, patient, kind, without letting it be seen what torture one is suffering. Then as the Master seems to want also to show me something of my misery it is not always easy to go on in peace when I am convinced that not only am I for *Him* an object of scorn and contempt, but when I am absolutely persuaded that all those around me are only bearing with me through charity and indulgence. To be pitied by Jesus is a grace and one loves it; but Father, the pity of creatures! Oh! for Him again one can bear and even love it, but it is just about as much as nature can do to submit to it."

In November, 1869, the Mother General returned to Rome, where the Society had again been approved and where the Œcumenical Council was pursuing its great work. On this journey to Rome, the Mother General in joining the train at Plaisance, stumbled and fell, dislocating her shoulder and

spraining her left wrist. With her usual energy, she got up and left for Florence. At Florence the shoulder was set, but hardly had she arrived in Rome than the pain became acute, and the muscles of the hand withered.

It was also at this time that Mother Mary of St. Victor was lying at death's door. So great was the Mother General's physical and moral suffering and the depth of her desolation, that a man of God one day remarked to her, "You seem to be a heart betrayed in an immense love." One cannot call oneself a Reparatrix with impunity.

"I well believe," wrote the Mother General, "that my want of submission to all that Our Lord willed was the cause of my state, but no longer finding Him within me, I passed, surrounded with sorrow, days and above all, nights, which will never be effaced from my memory, so terrible were they. All that, however, never caused me to neglect my charge. Never did I leave a letter unwritten nor send away anyone who wished to come to me. Our Lord did not allow any of these things and if I appeared to neglect His orders, which sometimes irritated my nature mad with suffering, Our Lord asked me with severity and great authority by what right I derogated from His orders. For me He was only a severe Master but I felt that He was watching me. His vigilance was a curb to my nature, but that curb, if I had dared, I would have thrown off. That which withheld me was the formal promise I had made to Our Lord to be faithful to Him whatever might happen. Had I given my word to a creature, I should have held it as sacred, it was only fitting then that a promise made to Our Lord should be scrupulously kept. Again, in spite of all my anguish, all my suffering, it was quite impossible for me to say to Our Lord: 'I am going to leave you, this is too much suffering.' In the depths of my heart I loved Him, but I did not wish

to acknowledge that love, either to Him or to myself. I wondered how I could continue to love Him, who was the cause of all my despair. . ."

These pages of Mother Mary of Jesus vividly depict the agony of her soul, but tell us little of the heroic courage she displayed under the crushing burden. To her directors only, she opened her mind with true humility and absolute frankness and spoke of her anguish, repugnance and struggles; it is from her daughters we learn something of her magnanimity, patience and strength. In the beginning of the Society, the enthusiasm of the Foundress, the fervour of her zeal, her ardent piety had captivated and drawn after her the first Reparatrixes. Later, after the year 1866 until the end, what above all struck newcomers and gained from the first their respectful admiration and confiding veneration was the serene kindness, the unalterable peace of their Mother. Ignorant of her private sorrows, they sought and found near her, comfort and consolation. Sometimes, Mother Mary of Jesus anticipated their needs and poured upon their souls that light she herself was denied. A certain Novice in 1869 had difficulties of which she had never spoken to anyone and which nothing could have revealed. One day the Mother General, without being asked, gave her some discreet advice, which she followed and thereby solved the difficulties in question. Better than anyone the authorized voice of Mother Mary of St. Maurice, called by God to take up the noble yet heavy inheritance of the Foundress, will tell us what Mother Mary of Jesus was during this crucifying period of her life:

"From the time that I first knew our venerated Mother, in 1867, at the beginning of my Novitiate, I was deeply impressed by her holiness. All in her spoke to my soul and greatly edified me. Her manner, her way of doing things, of speaking, so simple, so noble, so calm, did me the greatest good. To see her pray made me think of God, to hear her speak, whether in her Conferences, or even in recreation, where she always had interesting reminiscences, edifying instances to relate, enlarged and set our hearts on fire.

The same impressions were renewed each time that I had the happiness of being with her. They became permanent during the three consecutive years of my residence in Rome—from 1871 to 1874—when I was Assistant of the House. I should never have suspected all the trials and interior sufferings this noble soul was enduring. When difficulties, contradictions, sorrowful events occurred—and the Divine Master sent her exceptional ones, nothing betrayed her feelings. She was always the same, and did not appear depressed or sad, nor was she hindered in her work; she preserved her calm, her evenness of temper, which nothing altered, and those alone who were nearest to her and with whom the venerated Mother sometimes spoke more freely, knew a little of what she was enduring and suffering.

Giving herself entirely to God, to her work, to her daughters, she went on with indomitable energy and, at the same time, with gentleness and patience in the way of the Cross, working actively, interesting herself in everything, encouraging all around her.

Until the end and in spite of habitual physical sufferings, which were sometimes very acute (and these, added to her moral sufferings) she continued her life of quite uncommon mortification. Self-possessed and calm, she seemed always to be in the presence of God; to look at her was most restful.

She knew admirably how to encourage, console, raise up and keep souls in a supernatural atmosphere, urge

them on to perfection while at the same time, she followed up all the details of the material side of daily life and also the general welfare of the Institute.

Since the death of the venerated Mother, having examined her letters and writings, I have been struck by the greatness of the sufferings they reveal, and my admiration for the virtues which I saw her practise, has gone on increasing."

Sharing the common illusion, and receiving reassuring news from the Duke of Bassano, Mother Mary of Jesus did not foresee the terrible scourge that was going to sweep across France.

On July 15, 1870, the date of the declaration of the War, she left for Tournai, where with Father Ginhac she was to finish the adaptation of the Constitutions.

Neither too confident nor too fearful, Mother Mary of Jesus kept open both the Paris Houses, Vaugirard and the rue de Calais, as the diocesan authorities wished, but she diminished the number in the Communities.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was continued all the time of the War, and the Commune.[1]

Through all this terrible time Father Olivaint remained the devoted and faithful counsellor of the rue de Calais. One day he said to the Superior:

[1] The Commune is the name given to the form of government which revolutionary communists attempted to set up in Paris shortly after the capitulation of the city to the Prussians (January, 1871). For more than two months red anarchy prevailed in Paris. The movement aimed at the destruction of all authority, but when finally faced with political failure, the communists directed their savage fury against the Church. The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Darboy, and many priests, both secular and regular, were brutally massacred. The horrors of the Commune in many ways surpassed those of the Reign of Terror in 1792.

"My child, I am not afraid for you, you are keeping the good God and the good God will keep you and this quarter." These words proved to be a prophecy, for three nuns remained in the little House of the rue de Calais all the time that the Commune lasted and were miraculously preserved from all danger, not a window was broken; a petrol bomb fell into the chimney, stuck, and remained there for six months, but there was not a single fire in the whole neighbourhood, as the Father had promised.

The year following the War Mary of St. Victor died. After this blow Mother Mary of Jesus seemed in appearance to continue her usual life, but it was remarked that everything seemed to cost her an effort. She herself wrote about this time in her private notes:

"After the death of my daughter it seemed as if the last thread of my life was broken. I do not mean my physical life, that did not trouble me, I am speaking of my spiritual life. Frightful discouragement seemed to take possession of me. . . Everything seemed unbearable, but above all the occupations of my religious life. Everything, without exception, was a burden to me. . ."

She left Belgium in March, 1873, and learned on arriving in Rome that the Constitutions had been approved; the rest of the year was spent in visiting her Houses in France.

The Mother General was nearing the end of her trial. On December 20th, a holy religious, Father Semenenko, Superior General of the Resurrectionists, came to give a Conference to the Community. He seem inspired, spoke admirably and deeply im-

pressed all, but none more than Mother Mary of Jesus.

"His words," she wrote, "made all the chords of my soul vibrate, I felt my spiritual life returning and that Our Lord was going to come to my aid. I asked Father Semenenko to take charge of my soul, he accepted and from that day my soul found new life in God."

The Saints are distinguished from others by their absolute disinterestedness. Father Ginhac learned with pleasure of the change of which another than he had been the occasion: he thus congratulated the Mother General on it:

"January 13, 1874.

What you tell me of the state of your soul makes me thank Our Lord. How good He is to have kept in reserve for you so worthy a confessor! Under his direction not only will you be helped but you will advance in solid sanctity."

The storm had passed: after seven years the sky cleared for Mother Mary of Jesus. The years of trial and abandonment had detached her soul even from the consolations of God; they had convinced her of her helplessness and confirmed her in her humility. The Mother General had not, however, recovered her health, and in order to keep up her strength she had to submit to the ordinary régime of her daughters. She still felt the effects of her fall at Plaisance, and the pain in the nape of her neck was sometimes so violent that the weight of her veil was torture; but her soul was happy and consoled and animated her worn-out body and the Mother General's activity suffered in no way either from her fatigue or from her infirmities.

In her confidences to Father Semenenko we find again the language of her privileged years; God's silence had ceased and she began again in light and joy, a life of union.

During the last visits to her Communities her children had a presentiment that the hour of deliverance was drawing near for their dear Foundress. It was less the diminution of her strength that warned them, than the ever-increasing maturity of her virtue; a letter written at this time expresses the general impression:

"What peace! How calm our Mother is! What self-possession! What charity! I think nothing could disturb her peace, our Mother is so holy that I fear God is going to take her soon."

She had, however, to climb to the summit of her Calvary and to experience trials hitherto unknown.

Unexpected blows fell from both sides of her family. Shortly after Mary of St. Victor the Mother General lost her mother-in-law, then within a year's time of each other her two brothers, Charles and Théodore. In her brother Charles, the dearest affection remaining to her, Mother Mary of Jesus lost a devoted counsellor and a courageous protector who had assisted her in all her undertakings and defended her against every opposition.

It remained for Mother Mary of Jesus to sustain in the bosom of her religious family, trials all the more painful because no failure, no disunion, had until then afflicted the Society of Mary Reparatrix. The Bishop of Ferns in Ireland had in 1867 invited the Reparatrixes to his diocese, and had offered them a House in Wexford which was definitely opened

in September, 1870. Soon after several novices had joined the Community, which was so fervent and prosperous that in October, 1874, Dr. Furlong could write: "I have fourteen convents in my diocese and I can affirm that amongst them I do not know one that edifies me more than the Convent of Mary Reparatrix at Wexford. Lately I made a visitation of this convent and found in no other such a perfect spirit of piety and harmony."

Unhappily, this Community was not long in acting towards the Society in a way that disquieted the Mother General. Local influences and attachments were opposing the free action of central authority, and the spirit of the Society was threatened at Wexford. Mother Mary of Jesus not being able herself to go to Ireland deputed a Visitor; this measure displeased the Bishop. It was, nevertheless, decided that the Superior should be changed. This latter was preparing to return to Belgium, when from Dublin she wrote to the Mother General and asked to be dispensed from her vows; one choir religious and two novices shared her resolution. The Bishop of Wexford took back the House which he handed over to the old Superior, who organized a small and independent Community. The Superior at Wexford had been one of the first and most loved of the Mother General's companions. Mother Mary of Jesus felt the blow intensely and was sorrowfully surprised at this departure, but lost nothing of her supernatural calm.

Her soul accepted all, but the body was not able to bear up under such violent moral shocks. When in 1875 the Mother made her annual visit to Brussels

the Community was alarmed at her weakness. The Superior wished to consult a doctor, and the Mother General let her have her way. The doctor called in had for a long while venerated the invalid. He assured them there was no imminent danger to be feared, but that the Mother's state was serious and needed a great deal of care, that doubtless God wished the Society to get used to the idea of losing their Foundress. The Mother General did not dissemble the gravity of her state. She sometimes asked whether she was suffering from the same disease as that from which her father died, but the doctor always eluded the question. Leaving herself wholly in God's hands, the invalid took advantage of her enforced rest to look over her family and private papers and burn those which were of no further use. She left herself entirely in the care of the Superior, taking nothing without her authorization, and edifying all by her childlike submission, her peace and her patience. More than ever she welcomed those of her daughters who wished to see her, talking to them, heart to heart, of the spirit of the Society, its work, the virtues proper to it.

It was in the course of one of these conversations that, questioned as to who should succeed her in the government of the Society, Mother Mary of Jesus named without hesitation, Mother Mary of St. Maurice. This was forgotten by those who heard it until three years later the statement of the Mother General was verified.

Her stay in Brussels had strengthened Mother Mary of Jesus a little, and the time had come for her to return to Rome. The Superior, wishing to let

the Mother General's Assistants know the exact state of her health, asked the doctor for an official report. Learning of this, through an indiscretion, Mother Mary of Jesus was somewhat annoyed: "What do you think will become of me if all the Assistants General are looking after my health?" It was, however, not difficult to make her understand the necessity of this precaution. The report was shown to her and she read, not without emotion, the dreaded name of her father's illness: Angina pectoris.

The doctor recommended that both physical and mental strain should be avoided, but above all, anything that would be the occasion of emotion or contradiction. Unhappily, such occasions could not be avoided. The worthy priest, Monsieur Ortiz Uruela, who had called the Reparatrixes to Seville, had also obtained the foundation of a House of the Society at Cordova. M. Ortiz had then wished to have a Novitiate at Cordova; to this also the Mother General consented, though with great repugnance, as she thought that the Novitiate at Seville sufficed. Her reluctance, in spite of her consent, displeased M. Ortiz, and he who, until now, had greatly appreciated the Superior of Seville quite changed in her regard for he understood that in her firmness of character, he would find an obstacle to his absolutism: he, therefore, demanded that she should be recalled. As the Superior was giving entire satisfaction and was greatly esteemed by bishop and priests, the Mother General, not without reason, did not see her way to accede to M. Ortiz's desire. One concession

would have led to another and though it may have been postponed, a conflict was finally inevitable. The Mother General thought it better to recall the Superior of Cordova, and not being able to go herself, sent a Visitor to Spain. M. Ortiz insisted that the Visitor should accede to all his demands; this she could not do, whereupon M. Ortiz informed her that she could withdraw the four religious sent by the Mother General to Cordova, as for the Novices, he said, he and not they had formed them and they would remain there. He then prevailed upon the two Novices who had given the House to the Society to take it back, and M. Ortiz made one of them Superior, the other Assistant, and distributed the other charges amongst the rest of the Novices. The Mother Visitor then asked for an interview with the Bishop, who, greatly astonished, had heard nothing of all this painful affair.

Very soon M. Ortiz had serious contentions with the Bishop of Cordova and had to leave for Andujar with his Novices. The Bishop of Andujar had not, however, authorized the Community to establish itself in his diocese, so they returned to Madrid where Cardinal Moreno, a friend of M. Ortiz, welcomed them. Shortly afterwards, M. Ortiz died from congestion of the brain. Mother Mary of Jesus did not forget he had been her benefactor; at the news of his death she had a great number of Masses and Communions offered for him, which caused a priest, who had been fully acquainted with the Seville affair, to say "The Mother General has taken her revenge in the manner of the Saints."

The separation of Wexford had struck deep at the

heart of the Mother General, that of Cordova was another blow, but a third in June of the same year, 1876, afflicted her perhaps more than any.

The Mother General had with great generosity concurred in the Madura Mission, which was dear to her because it had cost her so much. Madura was one of the first foundations of the Society and holy religious had lived and died there. The works were prospering, and one has only to see the narrow cells in which the Reparatrixes were nearly suffocated, to understand a little of the heroism with which they devoted themselves to their work as Apostles.

The Vicar Apostolic of Madura, Mgr. Alexis Canoz, was common sense and uprightness personified. He was a man of duty and discipline and, quite incapable himself of intrigue, he was not clever enough to see through the designs of others. Under pretext of seconding the Reparatrixes, guilty ambition was aiming in the background at supplanting the Bishop. We cannot remain silent about these miserable weaknesses; they are instructive, they sanctify their victims, and two souls certainly drew from them precious merits: one was Mgr. Canoz in India, and the other Mother Mary of Jesus in Europe.

Unceasingly assailed with reports and complaints, Mother Mary of Jesus, as powerless to pacify as she was to satisfy everyone, determined in 1874 to recall the religious. The Provincial of Madura had herself solicited this measure, but when taken at her word, she pleaded so well in favour of the flourishing works of the Mission, that the order for the departure was withdrawn. Difficulties, however,

increased and were becoming more complicated. Two years later, in February, 1876, the Mother General named a new Provincial to replace the one who had governed the Mission for nine years. The deposed Provincial remained Superior of a House in a neighbouring Vicariate. This change, having been badly received, a Visitor was sent out and met with a deliberate opposition which ended in a schism. Two-thirds of the religious joined the deposed Provincial and with her declared they had decided to form an independent Institute.

Of the many afflictions which had filled the life of the Foundress, none, we think, was more bitter than that occasioned by the Mission of Madura. However, Mother Mary of Jesus had not yet drunk the chalice to the dregs. It seemed as though at the end of her life God willed that she should be tortured by all those she loved. In February, 1877, she learned from a newspaper cutting of a family misfortune which cut her heart and soul to the very depths. This blow was followed by an attack of paralysis which only energetic treatment prevented from proving fatal, but nothing now could restore the Mother General's strength, which was shattered by so many shocks; nevertheless, the following summer she visited a few of the Houses in France and Belgium.

Before leaving Rome she had had the consolation of a visit from Cardinal Joachim Pecci, whom she and her father had known in the world. They talked together for a long time. Returning to her room afterwards, the Mother General was visibly affected and seemed worn out. Her Secretary came

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to her and with that simple frankness always allowed by Mother Mary of Jesus, asked "What became of you, Mother, you were away such a long time?" "I was in the parlour with His Eminence, Cardinal Pecci, who has been kindness itself," and after a little hesitation she added, "he asked me to tell him all that Our Lord had shown me regarding the foundation of the Society. He wished to know everything." "And you told him all?" "Yes," replied the Mother General, still penetrated with what had taken place, "I told all." God thus allowed that the one who was to give the last approbation to the Constitutions of the Society, should have read the whole soul of the Foundress. Neither did Pope Leo XIII. forget that interview and it was with a thorough and personal knowledge that later he often spoke with admiration of their mother to the two sons of the Foundress and to her daughters in religion.

The day of her deliverance, however, was drawing near. Since February 24, 1877, she had been very ill and weak. In December, the doctor fearing another attack, hoped to avert it by advising the Mother to leave Rome for a colder climate. She consented to return to Brussels, but not being able to go right through without stopping, it was arranged that she should break her journey for a few days at Florence and stay with her eldest son. The Baron Adrian d'Hooghvorst went to Rome to fetch his mother. The night before leaving the Mother General's Secretary became suddenly ill and was unable to accompany her, but hoped to rejoin her soon; she did indeed, two months later, but it was

in Heaven. At Florence the change of air caused a slight and very short amelioration and after a few days' rest the Mother General spoke of continuing her journey. The Baron d'Hooghvorst asked first of all for a consultation; the Mother General explained that, as Superior General, she did not wish to remain long away from her Community. Out of regard to this sentiment, the doctors authorized her undertaking the journey, but God did not permit it, He wished His servant even in death to know the suffering of abandonment.

Deprived of her Secretary, whose illness still detained her in Rome, the Mother General had asked another Mother to come to her, but she too was ill with pneumonia and not able to travel. The Superior of Paris was then desired to rejoin Mother Mary of Jesus at Maçon, but several circumstances combined to prevent her immediate departure, and she had to beg the Mother General to postpone her journey. It was thought that the enforced and prolonged rest would be beneficial to the invalid. With her usual abnegation, the Mother replied that she would wait, but her state became each day more disquieting.

In the meantime, on February 7, 1878, the great Pope Pius IX. died. His death was a grief to the Church and deeply afflicted Mother Mary of Jesus, whose prayers and constant thoughts during her last days were that God would protect the Church and give to the Holy Pontiff for whom she was mourning, a worthy successor.

As long as she could drag herself along, Mother Mary of Jesus went for Communion to the Church

of the Blessed Trinity which was quite near. But this soon became impossible and M. d'Hooghvorst declared that he would avail himself henceforth of his mother's privilege of having the Holy Sacrifice offered in the house. Since her paralysis the Mother General found it difficult to remain fasting and the doctor had obtained from the Holy See the authorization for her to have Communion as Viaticum once a week. Seeing her end drawing near and feeling incapable of travelling, the Mother General asked for one of her Assistants General. This resolution was the first intimation of the blow that was soon to fall on the Institute. The invalid was visibly sinking; the doctor reported an attack of pleurisy and a return of the angina pectoris, while another attack of paralysis was imminent. On the 20th, the patient was very restless and suffocating, going from her bed to her armchair, seeking in vain for relief. Towards 10.30 p.m. the doctor returned for the fourth time that day and found her in a very serious state: the paralysis had begun. The Mother Assistant warned Baron d'Hooghvorst that it was time to think of the Last Sacraments.

The invalid remained absolutely calm, already dead to the world, absorbed in God. "Mother, you are suffering very much," said the Sister who had accompanied her from Rome and was nursing her. "Oh, yes, . . . the end is very near!" "Would you not like to receive Communion to-morrow?" "Yes, if I am still here." At this moment Baron d'Hooghvorst entered his mother's room, "We will not wait until to-morrow to give you the consolation of receiving Holy Communion. We are going to

ask them to bring It to you at once." "But at this hour, dear child, I shall disturb everyone." The Baron sent at once for Father Pizzicaria, S.J., his mother's confessor. "Dear child," said his dying mother, "it is not the Father I want, it is the Curé." She thus indicated that she wished to receive Extreme Unction and immediately all was prepared for the ceremony. Before anointing her, the priest asked the invalid if she would like to go to confession; perfectly calm, she replied: "It is needless, I made my confession this morning," she then received Holy Communion.

The Very Reverend Father Beckx, General of the Society of Jesus, was then living at Fiesole. As soon as he learned of Mother Mary of Jesus's condition he gave orders that one of his religious should be constantly at the disposal of the invalid. Father Pizzicaria, to whom this charge fell, assisted at this peaceful agony. Mother Mary of Jesus quite expected to die that night, and at dawn expressed regret that she was still on earth, but her son had not lost all hope of saving her, for which intention he had many Masses said.

During the day of the 21st, the venerable Foundress gave to her Assistant her last blessing for her daughters, after which she remained calm and silent, overpowered by the paralysis. In the evening the Apostolic Benediction arrived from Rome, one of the first given by the new Pope Leo XIII. This was a supreme consolation for the dying religious and she wished that the telegram announcing it should be placed on her breast. She then seemed to sleep. Towards the middle of the night she

ceased to show any signs of consciousness. "Our Mother is no longer conscious," writes the Mother Assistant, on the morning of the 22nd, "but she is very calm and quiet and seems to sleep. She will probably pass away like this." About 11 o'clock on the morning of February 22, 1878, Feast of the Chair of St. Peter at Antioch, Mother Mary of Jesus peacefully expired.

Mother Mary of Jesus had lived 59 years, 4 months and 11 days. Often her daughters had heard her say: "I shall work until I am sixty."

As soon as the news became known in the town, an unexpected crowd of visitors flocked to the Palace of the d'Hooghvorsts. Florence seemed to have lost another Magdalene of Pazzi. At least the report had spread abroad that a great servant of God was dead and the concourse of people was so great that Guards had to be placed at the doors of the Palace to prevent anyone entering while the body was being placed on the bier.

Baron Edmund d'Hooghvorst only arrived from Belgium on February 23rd. His grief at not finding his mother alive was great; without a thought of human respect he asked her pardon before everyone for any pain he might have caused her.

The obsequies of Mother Mary of Jesus were to take place on February 25th. As his mother had died in his home, Baron d'Hooghvorst determined that she should not have the humble funeral of a religious, but one more fitting to her rank in the world.

The remains of the Venerable Foundress were enclosed in a wooden coffin, an opening was made

above the face and glass affixed. The solemn service took place at half-past ten on the morning of the 25th in the church magnificently draped in mourning. The Very Reverend Father Beckx, Superior-General of the Society of Jesus, prevented by an indisposition, was represented by the Reverend Father Rubillon, S.J., Assistant of France. Until March 10th the coffin remained in the crypt of the Santa Trinita where each day the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated, after which it was transported to Rome. To-day it lies in the cemetery of San Lorenzo in the mortuary chapel built for her and her daughters by Baron d'Hooghvorst.

At Rome, as soon as the news of the death was known, several Cardinals, a number of Bishops, prelates and religious, hastened to express their lively sympathy and the part they took in the great loss sustained by the Society. His Eminence, Cardinal Monaco la Valletta, Vicar General of His Holiness; Cardinal Deschamps, Archbishop of Mechlin; Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, at Rome for the Conclave, were amongst the first.

In the Houses of the Society above all the grief was intense. The immense sorrow felt by all was proof enough of the place that their Mother held in their hearts and of the good she had done them. They had been so used to seeing her ill and suffering that in a way her death was almost unexpected.

The following lines written after her death by one of the Community in Rome well expresses what she was to them during her last years:

"It was thanks to our venerated Mother that such a happy family and religious spirit reigned in our House

in Rome. She was so maternal, kind and simple, that one went to her as to a mother.

She welcomed all without showing either weariness or impatience as though her only occupation were to listen to each one. It was marvellous how she gave herself to everyone, finding time for everything, prayer as well as business; doing everything so calmly, neglecting nothing. We were so used to this that we took it as a matter of course.

In the morning after a very meagre breakfast, she spent a long time in the chapel, then began her work. In the evening, before a light collation, she paid another long visit to the Blessed Sacrament to make up for the night watches that were now forbidden her.

During the winter of 1876 she often gave Conferences to the Community, especially on the Sundays in Lent. We went to them as to a feast, and loved to listen to her words which were so convincing, frank and simple.

In Rome, at that time, there were several invalids. Every day and several times a day, our Mother visited them, and her maternal kindness made them eagerly look forward to her visits, which, they said, did them more good than anything. Added to this, there was such tact, such perfect discretion, such a gift for speaking of God. . ."

From Heaven, however, the Foundress was finishing her work, her teaching was becoming dearer to all, and each one felt more and more urged to imitate her. Through her intercession her daughters the world over were obtaining precious graces, graces of resignation and fervour and even of restoration to health.

On March 3rd Mother Mary of the Eucharist was elected Vicaress General. Immediately she convoked the General Chapter at Toulouse for the election of a new Superior. The Chapter opened on May 24th

under the presidency of Cardinal Desprez, Archbishop of Toulouse. A preparatory retreat was given by Father Ginhac. No one was better able than this holy religious to put before the Capitulants the path by which they must walk in order to follow in the footsteps of their Mother. On June 1st Mother Mary of St. Maurice, Superior of the House of Toulouse, was elected General. Several of the Capitulants then remembered that some years before the Mother Foundress had announced that Mother Mary of St. Maurice would succeed her.

In Mother Mary of St. Maurice the Mother Foundress had a worthy successor. Under her wise government the Society flourished and developed; the Houses already established were consolidated and forty-seven new foundations were made; one of these being that of Jerusalem where Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed was established and still continues; while the quite recent foundation of Entebbe in East Africa was one of the intentions nearest and dearest to her heart at the time of her death.

The simple dignity with which Mother Mary of St. Maurice fulfilled her office commanded respect and admiration, whilst her maternal kindness, combined with great frankness and loyalty, won the hearts of all her daughters and made innumerable friends outside the convent walls.

Before her death, Mother Mary of St. Maurice had the joy of seeing the result of years of devoted labour in the opening of the process of inquiry into the Cause for the Beatification of the Mother Foundress.

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EPILOGUE

HALF a century has passed since Mother Mary of Jesus left this land of exile, and time—the merciless destroyer of all here below—has not been able to throw a veil over the memory of this valiant Reparatrix. She is still living in her Institute through the remembrance of the virtues that she practised to such a high degree and which unceasingly stimulate her daughters to walk generously in her steps; she is there still by the protection with which she surrounds them, working from Heaven for the growth of the Society, as she is there by the veneration paid to her memory, not only by those who continue her work, but also by all those who have proved the efficacy of her benevolent intercession. As has been related, God willed, even during her lifetime, to attest by wonderful favours the influence Mother Mary of Jesus had with Him. In our own day this influence is becoming more and more firmly established and many precious graces received; health restored, temporal and spiritual favours granted, have all been attributed to her intercession.

These multiplied attestations of the power of the Venerable Foundress over the heart of God make us hope in the near future for the successful conclusion of the Cause for her Beatification. This work is being pursued. The process of enquiry held at Liège in April, 1913, has been laid before the Sacred Congregation of Rites and the Revision of the writings of the Venerable Foundress has proceeded satisfactorily.

May Our Lord deign to bless this work, preparing the glorification of this chosen soul. At the cost of numberless sufferings she has given to the Church a new religious family, devoted to reparation which is so necessary in our time when evil is exploited with so much audacity, in defiance of the sovereign rights of God and the sacred teachings of His Church.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

The little Society of Mary Reparatrix proposes to itself to make reparation, as far as possible, with the help of grace, for the outrages offered to the Divine Majesty and the evil caused to men by sin. It seeks in so doing to walk in the footsteps of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom Jesus Christ, her Son, the only true Redeemer and Repairer, associated to Himself in the work of Reparation, and it is for this reason that it is called the *Society of Mary Reparatrix*.

To make reparation through Mary and with Mary, at the feet of Jesus, this is the whole plan, the whole aim, of the Society, and its whole reason for existence. It is true that to every loving soul the idea of *reparation* becomes a necessity; and that *union with Mary* in honouring Jesus dates from the Cenacle and from Calvary, but what is new and distinctive in the Society is the idea of uniting for ever these two sentiments and making them the constant motive power and directing force of one's whole life. It is this characteristic that gives the *Society of Mary Reparatrix* a distinct and unique position among religious institutes.

To reproduce as much as possible the life of the Most Blessed Virgin, to do all in union with her and with the same intentions, considering her specially as their Queen, their Mother and their Model—this is the whole plan of the Society of Mary Reparatrix.

The life of a Reparatrix is two-fold in character: by turns it is occupied (1) with God in prayer and praise and (2) with our neighbour in self-devoting apostolic work. Reparation to God, as offended and forgotten, especially in the mystery of the Eucharist, is realized, in the first place, by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Each day the Blessed Sacrament is exposed at about seven in the morning, at the conventual Mass. It remains exposed till the time of Benediction, which takes place towards the close of day. After Mass the adorers succeed one another every half-hour. Thus in the midst of cities, in which sin abounds, where words of blasphemy ring through the air, where contempt of God and His law exhibits itself in all manner of scandals and crimes, where sacrileges perhaps are committed, the Divine Master, the Eternal King, receives due homage on the throne of His love. There are those who keep Him company, who adore Him, who humble themselves at His feet, who ask pardon for all the unfortunates who know not what they do, and for the guilty who know only too well.

As a reparation for the offences of which Our Lord is the object during the night, two religious are appointed to adore before the tabernacle, from midnight, to one o'clock. Every Thursday, in memory of the institution of the Eucharist and of the Passion, the Blessed Sacrament remains exposed all night, as also during the three nights preceding Ash Wednesday. The Divine Eucharist is the centre, the home, of the Christian life, especially of a life of reparation. The religious of Mary Reparatrix

should live near the Blessed Sacrament while their souls should live *on* the Blessed Sacrament.

Besides the morning hours of prayer, Mass, the adorations and examens, Benediction, a half-hour's spiritual reading, the rosary and the litanies of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, the Choir Religious, with the intention of making reparation to the adorable Heart of Our Lord, assemble three times a day to recite the office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On Saturdays and on feasts of the Blessed Virgin they substitute for this office that of the Immaculate Conception.

The principal devotions are the great devotions of the Catholic Church; the Eucharist, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Passion and the Immaculate Conception. The principal feasts are, first—those which rank first in the universal Church, together with feasts connected with the devotions mentioned above, and the feast of St. Joseph; next in order—those which recall memorable dates or names dear to the Society, and also the feasts of the Saints and the Blessed of the Society of Jesus. The Sacraments received by Reparatrixes—Penance, the Eucharist and Extreme Unction—should be received in a spirit of reparation. The religious should be Reparatrixes till their last sigh.

This desire, this need, this passion for reparation, should penetrate the soul, the acts, the entire existence of a Reparatrix, in accordance with the instructions of the Mother Foundress.

"No opportunity of making reparation should be neglected. Begin the day with an act of love to Our Lord for those whose first thought is never for Him.

If we find it hard to rise in the morning, let us offer this act in reparation for the sensuality of those who slothfully spend whole mornings in bed.

If we suffer from the cold or from excessive heat, we should endure it in reparation for all the luxurious means employed by people in the world to avoid such discomfort.

The Blessed Sacrament should be adored to compensate for the insults offered It and for disbelief in the Real Presence—and so for the rest. Reparation each moment of the day and the night, by each pulsation of the heart, by every breath, by each aspiration of the soul, by every movement of the lips. . ."

But all this does not suffice for the zeal of a Reparatrix. It is not enough for her to burn like a lamp before the Tabernacle; she must enkindle this light and these flames in other hearts. Without even going outside the convent walls, or leaving the Altar, a Reparatrix can and must devote herself to the Apostolate "in the silence and the shadow of the Tabernacle."

Retreat Houses, where public and private retreats are given, are attached to the Houses of the Society, and the other apostolic works, such as catechetical instruction for converts and children, clubs for girls, sodalities, circulating libraries, etc., are developed according to local needs.

There are two degrees in the Society, the Choir Religious, called Mothers, and the Coadjutrix Sisters. To the former is specially entrusted the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, together with the recitation of office, and the works of zeal. The Coadjutrix Sisters assist the Choir Religious in the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, take part in

all the Community religious exercises, and enjoy the same spiritual privileges. In addition, they fulfil the domestic offices connected with Community life. They, as well as the Choir Religious, may volunteer for the foreign missions.

Without being rigorously canonical, enclosure is observed; but visitors are freely admitted to the parlours and the part of the House reserved for retreatants.

The Rules of the Society are those of St. Ignatius, adapted to a Community of women and to the work of Reparation.

At the present time the Society counts about sixty Houses, and is established in most of the countries of Europe, as well as in America, Canada, Africa and the East. It has accomplished much during the seventy years since it was founded, and rightly may we say that the words of the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII., when speaking of reparation, have been verified. "Truly this is the work of the hour; the finger of God is here."

Appendix II

LIST OF CONVENTS OF MARY REPARATRIX

ITALY	*ROME,* Via dei Lucchesi, 9, *GENOA,* Via Curtatone, 6. *FLORENCE,* Via Gino Capponi, 50. *MILAN,* Via San Barnaba, 46.
GREAT BRITAIN	*LONDON,* Tower House, 4 Chiswick Lane, W. 4. *NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,* Tyneholme, Osborne Road. *EDINBURGH,* 216 Ferry Road, Leith.
IRELAND	*DUBLIN,* 53 Merrion Square. *CORK,* Summerhill South. *LIMERICK,* Laurel Hill Avenue.
FRANCE	*PARIS,* Rue Michel-Ange, 27, Auteuil. *PAU,* Avenue Edouard VII. *TOULOUSE,* Rue des Renforts, 8. *NANTES,* Avenue de Launey, 22. *BOULOGNE-SUR-MER,* Enclos de l'Evêche, 5. *LIESSE,* Rue Mont Cornet, 20. *LE MANS,* Boulevard Négrier, 48. *STRASBURG,* Rue Ste. Elisabeth, 14. *LA HOUBE,* L'Oasis, par Dabo. Moselle.
BELGIUM	*BRUSSELS,* Rue de la Poste, 51. *LIEGE,* Place St. Jacques, 12. *SINAY, WAES,* Place de l'Eglise.

BELGIUM *(continued)*	*TOURNAI,* Place Gabrielle Petit, 16. Chaussée de Lille, 27.
HOLLAND	*MAESTRICHT,* Rue du Chapon, 23.
HUNGARY	*BUDAPEST,* Ulloi-ut, 75.
SPAIN	*SEVILLE,* Calle de Sta. Clara, 12. *BARCELONA,* Calle Caspe, 51. *VALENCIA,* Calle Gobernador Viejo, 19. *MANRESA,* Plaza de Cots, 30. *MADRID,* Calle de Torija, 12. *SAN SEBASTIAN,* Calle Easo, 20. *AVILA,* Calle del Rastro, 2. *VALLADOLID,* Acera de San Juan de Letran. *VITORIA,* Calle de San Antonio, 16. *JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA,* Plaza de los Angeles, 3. *CADIZ,* Segismundo Moret, 15. *SANTANDER,* Calle Isabel la Catolica, 8. **MALAGA,* Plaza de San Francisco, 14. **GIJON,* Paseo de Begona, 40. *SAN GERVASIO,* Mahon I. *MURCIA,* Vinadel, 40. *BILBAO,* Plaza de Zabalburu, 1. *CHAMARTIN, MADRID,* Convento de Maria Reparadora, Chamartin de la Rosa.
BALEARIC ISLANDS	*PALMA DE MALLORCA,* Calle Campaner, 8.

* The first destroyed and the second closed during the revolution of 1931.

ASIA	*JERUSALEM,* Couvent de Marie Réparatrice, P.O. Box 29.
AFRICA	*CAIRO, EGYPT,* 15, Rue Onsy-Barakat, Choubrah. *UGANDA, E. AFRICA,* Catholic Mission, Entebbe.
MAURITIUS ISLES	*ROSE HILL,* Route Royale, 232.
MADAGASCAR	*FIANARANTSOA,* Couvent de Marie Réparatrice, Place de la Cathedrale, Ambatomena, Via Majunga.
UNITED STATES	*NEW YORK,* 14 East 29th Street. *DETROIT,* 17330 Quincy Avenue.
CANADA	*MONTREAL,* 1025, Avenue Mont Royal. *TROIS RIVIERES,* Rue St. Charles, 117. *ST. LAURENT,* Rue St. Matthieu, 7.
CUBA	*HAVANA,* Avenida Simon Bolivar, 137. *CAMAGÜEY,* Calle de San Francisco, 13.
*MEXICO	**MEXICO CITY.* **PEUBLA DE LOS ANGELES.* **GUADALAJARA.*

* Closed since the late revolution, 1927.

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